

Literary Snippets



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Colophons Across Space and Time

Edited by

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TOWARDS A DISCIPLINE OF COLOPHONOLOGY AND COLOPHONOGRAPHY

Since 2016, we have been holding workshops on Middle Eastern manuscript culture at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, twice interrupted by Covid during 2020 and 2021. The purpose of our meetings is to provide a space for scholars to discuss various aspects of manuscript production, use, and transmission, concentrating on the scribe and the user rather than the main literary texts found in manuscripts. Our first meeting was in 2016 on allographic/garshunographic writing systems; the results were published in two special issues of *Intellectual History of the Islamicate World* (Vol. 7, Number 2–3, 2019 and Vol. 8 Number 1, 2020) under the title *Writing in My Own Script: Allographic and Garshunographic Systems in Late Antiquity*. The second meeting in 2018 was on dots, marginalia, and paratextual elements and the third meeting in 2019 on scribal habits; results from both of these meetings were published in the volume *Scribal Habits in Near Eastern Manuscript Traditions* (Gorgias Press, 2020). Our fourth meeting, planned for 2020 but postponed due to the Covid pandemic to 2022, was on colophons. We now present its outcomes in this volume and the accompanying Reader.

Late antique scholars and medievalists who work on manuscripts as primary sources are very much familiar with the art of the colophon. But the history of the colophon dates back much further than late antiquity, to ancient history when scribes in ancient Mesopotamia chiseled colophons on cuneiform tablets as early as the mid-third millennium BCE. Two papers in this collection—one by Szilvia **Sövegjarto** the other by Jon **Taylor** *et al.*—cover the BCE Mesopotamian period. At their inception, colophons were writing production records: who wrote what, when and where? In a way, they are the earliest formation of what we now call metadata. Ancient colophons even provide statistics: how many lines were written in a particular work? As we enter late antiquity, colophons take on a life of their own and begin to acquire literary properties—snippets but nevertheless literary objects. They developed into an art form with distinctive formulaic phraseology. In some traditions, scribes began to record historical events that occurred just before or during the production of a manuscript, events that otherwise would be lost to history. Readers and users also began to insert colophons in existing manuscripts, creating a plethora of colophon types.

How are we to approach the study of colophons? At one extreme, one can collect a large set of colophons and perform distance reading methodologies to draw

general conclusions about the collected colophons or their intellectual milieu. Depending on one's inquiry, colophons can be approached at different degrees of the macro-micro analysis trajectory. Some of the studies presented here aim to tell us something about communities at large. Ali **Langroudi** focuses on West Syriac Persian speakers as a community and uses the colophons they produced to reconstruct their history. Ephrem **Ishac** goes beyond the main scribes who produced the primary colophons and focuses on secondhand colophons which intersect with the world of documentary sources: agreements, canons, and letters, scattered here and there at the front and end leaves of manuscripts. Menachem **Katz** and Hillel **Gershuni** investigate Hebrew and Aramaic colophons produced by Jews, especially ones that occur at the *beginning* of manuscripts. Evelyn **Burkhardt** studies the Samaritans; not wanting to introduce additional texts into their scripture, they found ingenious ways to represent colophons without adding texts.

Several papers in this collection focus on specific scribes. This is indeed most welcome as scholarship tends to concentrate on literary authors who produced larger texts. But it is the scribes who bring us these texts and learning something about their life or intellectual environment gives us a better understanding of how the text was utilized throughout history. Some scribes may already be known to us from history, either because they held a religious position or if they were also the authors of literary texts. But most scribes remain in obscurity. Habib **Ibrahim** reconstructs the life of Marqus of Aleppo, a seventeenth century scribe who wrote in Arabic. Víctor **de Castro León** investigates 'Ali b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Sharafi through three colophons that were previously trivialized in scholarship. Shiva **Mihan** illuminates us with hitherto unknown factoids about Aḥzar, the scribe who was instrumental in the development of the nasta'liq hand, all based on the colophons he produced. Aslisho **Qurboniev** and Gowaart **van den Bossche** tell us about the scholarly acts during the early Ilkhanid state through the prism of one scribe named Buzurgmihr. Robert **Vanhoff** tells us the story of two brothers who produced a Hebrew manuscript, Shlomo b. Buya'ah writing the consonantal text and his brother Ephrayim providing the dotting and other paratextual material. These are otherwise unknown or at best obscure names. But their colophons secured for them a place in history and a role in our scholarly dramas.

Indeed, early humanists of the Early Modern period were well aware of the value of colophons to the degree that some of them began to mimic traditional colophons, using phraseology found in historical colophons, and produced mini colophons in print form. And manuscript catalog writers, especially those of the nineteenth century, almost always produced snippets of important factoids in their printed catalogs. Nick **Posegay** focuses his study on colophons produced by the movable-type printing business.

But comprehensive studies of the colophon as an object—producing a typology of colophons as well as determining their formal properties—did not take place in earnest until recently, and even then, such studies are rare. An overview of “the field” as it stands is given here by Miriam L. **Hjälml** and Peter **Tarras**; they also provide a bibliography of colophon studies for Armenian, Arabic, Coptic, Ethiopic,

Georgian, and Syriac. When studying the colophon itself as an object one can drill into its text as any other piece of literature, studying various aspects of its literary style and function, as well as linguistic features that distinguish colophon texts from the main text found in a manuscript. This is particularly interesting in multilingual environments, or when the scribe's mother tongue is connected to the primary text of the manuscript in a diglossic relationship. Here, the colophon is an essential linguistic source into how the scribe's native tongue interacts with the higher literary register of the manuscript text. An exemplary study of the literary and linguistic features of colophons can be found here by Khachik **Harutyunyan** for Armenian. F. Redhwan **Karim** and Yousry **Elseadawy** utilize stylistic features, this time in Arabic colophons, to demonstrate how one can reconstruct scribal bibliographical details. Hamid **Bohloul** and Sonja **Brentjes** present a microtypology of colophons based on keywords found in the colophon text.

While the history of early literature is dominated by men, colophons give us the opportunity to peek into the lives of women, be it scribes (see the "female scribe" in Jon **Taylor** *et al.*'s contribution), women who were active in financing the production of manuscripts, or women who saved a manuscript by purchasing it and donating it to a monastic library. Melissa **Moreton** dedicates her entire study to female scribes in Early Modern Italy. David **Zakarian** utilizes colophons as a source for Armenian women history.

Whatever you would like to get out of colophons, we hope that there will be at least one paper here that will draw your attention. If not, there are enough literary snippets quoted to keep you entertained. More literary snippets can be found in the accompanying Reader volume titled: *Literary Snippets: A Colophon Reader*, soon to be released after this volume.

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MANUSCRIPTS OFFERED FOR THE GODS: DEDICATORY COLOPHONS FROM MESOPOTAMIA

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Mesopotamian scribal culture did not reward originality. Manuscripts contained works handed down from generation to generation without substantial changes in form and content. Scribes engaged in copying a traditional corpus of lexical and literary compositions have not left us much evidence of the *raison d'être* or of the setting of these manuscripts – except a few colophons which occasionally let shine through the institution – or even the human being – behind the manuscript.

The practice of inserting scribal remarks to the end of a manuscript date back in ancient Mesopotamia to the mid-third millennium BCE and it had been continued until the end of the cuneiform tradition. Colophons were not conventional elements of manuscripts, but freely added components providing various pieces of meta-information, e.g. on the length of the composition, the identity of the scribe, the location and condition of the source, or the place and date of production. Mesopotamian colophons are useful sources of information about manuscript production, textual transmission as well as centers of learning. They provide insights into the ancient scribal lore and help us to trace the manuscripts' historical, political, social and linguistic context.

Manuscripts with colophons may come from various contexts ranging from exercises of apprentice scribes to master copies of scholars. Their value lies in their

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importance for Mesopotamian cultural history, documenting the early development of scribal culture. The contents included in colophons were conditioned by a general scribal *koine*, which was, however, embedded in a literary culture, and was thus subject to change in time and space.

Colophons in cuneiform manuscript cultures belong more closely to the manuscript than e.g. in case of medieval codices: they were almost without exception produced during the same writing process and by the same scribes as the manuscripts themselves. They were usually not transmitted together with the body of the text, thus these annotations were unique elements of the written artefacts.

The material available for the study of colophons is by no means dense. Regarding the spatial and temporal distribution of manuscripts, we only have snapshots. A synchronic comparison of the material is therefore hardly possible and even the diachronic comparison has to take into account potential regional or local differences. These limitations should be kept in mind when assessing the material. Nevertheless, especially due to the composition of the source material is it fascinating when a rather infrequently attested scribal practice, namely the tradition of dedicatory colophons, can be tracked in various eras and locations throughout Mesopotamian history.

2. THE EMERGENCE OF A CULTURAL PRACTICE

Votive objects of various forms and materials are well-known from all around Mesopotamia. These objects were deposited in temples and also found in their original settings in many instances. Quite frequently, these objects also carried shorter or longer dedicatory inscriptions recording the name of the donor or even offering the object in the donor's name for a god or goddess. Some cuneiform tablets contain similar dedications. However, comparing these dedicatory inscriptions to colophons of a given time period, a strict distinction between the two categories is not possible in many cases due to their formal and functional similarities.

Dedicatory colophons seem to have a lot in common both with votive inscriptions and colophons. Indeed, finalizing a manuscript with a dedication can be also regarded as a "finishing touch". Such additions, moreover, provide us with the pieces of information expected in colophons: the name of the scribe and his intentions for offering a given manuscript, the date of production and others. Most importantly, however, dedicatory colophons offered the manuscript as a demonstration of the scribe's skills and crafts to a deity and thus these written artefacts became votive objects.

The first colophons of dedicatory content are attested from the late third millennium BCE, from the Old Akkadian and Ur III periods and have been written in Sumerian. It remains unknown whether the practice of offering written artefacts was already an established practice by this time. Interestingly, this cultural practice became more widespread beyond the boundaries of the Sumerian manuscript culture in later eras. From the first millennium on, similar colophons are also known from Akkadian manuscripts, written in Akkadian.

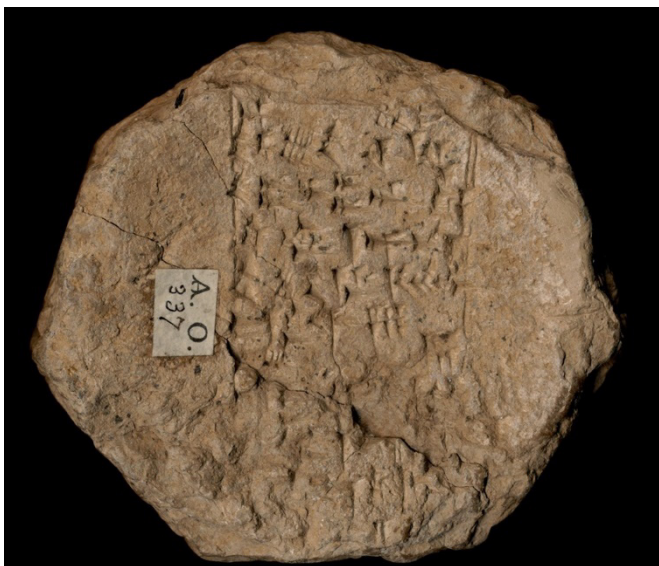


Figure 1: Upper side of the prism AO 337 (late third millennium BCE) with a dedicatory colophon offering the written artefact for the goddess of writing, Nisaba

The cultural practice established at the end of the third millennium survived and revolved, and has been transferred to the Akkadian manuscript culture. Therefore, it can be assumed that the practice was widespread despite the scarcity of textual evidence in form of colophons and the colophons were likely only the physical remains of a ritual which was subject of preservation in Mesopotamia. Indeed, just as most votive objects do not contain any inscriptions, it is possible that a higher number of manuscripts belong to those offered for deities without putting this fact into writing.

Beyond similarities, there are also differences between various examples attested in different eras. On the first place, the deity the dedicatory formula was directed to changed in the course of time. While Sumerian dedications addressed the goddess Nisaba, Akkadian dedications referred to the god Nabû, both being deities of writing and the patrons of scribes. Consequently, the role of the respective deities in the pantheon remained constant.

Dedicatory colophons initiated a new tradition, manifesting in new motives of scribes for producing manuscripts as well as supplementing them with colophons. Since the earliest dedicatory colophons date to the late third millennium BCE, it is likely that the emergence of this cultural practice correlated with the fact that from this period on, each manuscript was attributed to one scribe only: the individual emerged from the mass.¹ Interestingly, the motivation for adding the scribe's name

¹ In contrast to manuscripts known from the Early Dynastic III period, that is, from the mid-third millennium BCE where in most cases a group of scribes was in charge for the produc-

at the end of a manuscript did not aim to mark ownership of the tablet or to preserve the scribe's name for eternity. These colophons, written on votive objects, were means of communication with the divine sphere in the first place.

3. THE DONATION, THE DONOR AND THE PATRON

Manuscripts supplemented with dedicatory colophons mostly contain lexical compositions. Thus lexical manuscripts were considered effective votive offerings in ancient Mesopotamia. The first scribes who wished to show off their craft for the Sumerian goddess Nisaba followed two different strategies when choosing the content of the written artefacts: they either chose to prepare a faithful copy of a standard list with a long transmission history, like the list of professions Lu₂ A, or they picked a less standardized list and presented their own adaptations. Potentially, among others sign lists or lists of personal names are original recensions of individual scribes. Lexical lists during the late third millennium BCE, as it is confirmed also by these practices, were apparently no teaching materials but appropriate scholarly texts demonstrating the depth of a scribe's knowledge.

The tradition of providing votive offerings for the goddess Nisaba and later for the god Nabû in form of written artifacts as attested from the Old Akkadian period on remained a practice up to the Late Babylonian period. While the content of these written artifacts was apparently important in the early periods, this aspect eventually became insignificant later and these manuscripts fulfilled no other role beyond being deposited in the temple. However, it is noteworthy that scribes who wanted to present their craft for the goddess of writing, even in later periods, chose a lexical composition for this purpose and not, for example, a piece of literature, e.g. a praise poem of the respective deity. The manuscripts produced for this purpose and supplemented with a dedicatory colophon were embedded in a cultural practice which was presumably in perpetual use in course of over one and a half millennia. Similar colophons from later epochs draw a quite detailed picture on related rituals.²

The quality of the votive objects from the third millennium BCE implicates that this practice was originally not related to scribal education and was not exclusively practiced by apprentice scribes but by those more advanced in cuneiform writing, maybe even at the end of their professional training. Indeed, the scribes on these prisms are mainly entitled as *dub-sar* "scribe", the proper term for apprentice scribe, *dub-sar tur* "junior scribe" was only attested in one case.³

tion of a given manuscripts and consequently several names were listed in the extant colophons, sometimes also specifying the role of one or the other scribe.

² For further literature on first millennium manuscripts see Cavigneaux 1999, Gesche 2000 and George 2010. The practice is also traceable in colophons of the second millennium BCE.

³ The manuscript produced and offered by a junior scribe is NBC 8495, an unpublished tablet with its colophon quoted by Veldhuis 2014: 70. From the late third millennium, altogeth-

From the Old Babylonian period on, however, dedicatory colophons are more closely related to scribal training. The written artefacts – in the Old Babylonian period mostly prisms, later also clay tablets – dedicated and presented to the gods were likely produced by apprentice scribes in an earlier phase of their academic education. Old Babylonian dedicatory colophons still address the goddess of writing and patron of the scribes, Nisaba, though the use of the Sumerian language was restricted to religious, scholarly as well as teaching purposes. Consequently, the practice is still closely related to the Sumerian culture of writing. Though the manuscripts still contain lexical compositions in most cases, these compositions are less advanced and the hand of the scribes is less fine, so the scribes can be rather identified as apprentices pursuing their academic training. In later periods, after Sumerian loosed its importance as the language of academic education, dedicatory colophons also switched their focus and started to address the Akkadian god Nabû, also a god of writing, wisdom and patron of the scribal profession. The scribes producing these dedicatory colophons, however, remained pupils learning the cuneiform script as it can be gathered from a few colophons and the outer features of the manuscripts. The cultural practice of offering written artefacts by trained scribes underwent a transformation: from the Old Babylonian period, these offerings were made by apprentice scribes for their own as well as for their families' well-being.

The implications of this practice are manifold, nevertheless, the background of the dedication remains undocumented even in the most detailed colophons. For the sake of comparison, a Buddhist religious practice can be mentioned here. In a Buddhist context, the act of copying or reproducing sūtras is believed to provide religious merit for the practitioner. Moreover, the merit generated by copying could be also transferred to others, e.g. to living or deceased family members or for the patron of the copyist.⁴ Without indicating that any of these aspects are relevant specifically in the case of the Mesopotamian material, it should be pointed out that the significance and meaning of this practice is far from plausible and the religious motivation behind the scribes' activities can be only speculated on. Apparently, Mesopotamian scribes intended to gain the support of the gods for their person as well as for their family, and did not ask specifically for merit related to their craftsmanship from the gods of writing. Still, written artefacts which served as votive offerings were not dedicated to any other gods except Nisaba and Nabû.

er nine manuscripts with dedicatory colophons are known to me, five dating to the Old Akkadian (L 1267; AO 337; Erm 15000; BM 86271; MDP 27, 196) and four to the Ur III period (HS 1526, NBC 8495, NMB 78411 and a tablet from the G. Ligabue collection published by Fales and Krispijn 1979–1980).

⁴ On medieval Buddhist colophons see Drège 2007a and 2007b.

4. THE COLOPHONS

A shared intention of the originators of written artefacts with dedicatory colophons was to dedicate an artifact crafted and inscribed by their own hand. Short dedications were placed directly after the composition, longer dedications are usually provided on the reverse of a tablet or on the top of a prism. These positions provided enough space for longer entries and the respective colophons were also easily accessible. Good visibility was apparently a concern of scribes.

Dedicatory colophons are inspired by as well as closely related to dedicatory inscriptions on votive objects, not surprisingly, these written artifacts in fact functioned as votive offerings. As Veldhuis (2014: 70) pointed out, dedicatory colophons are also closely related to the *arad₂-zu* “your servant” type of seal inscriptions in regard of their content, and in some cases, even their form and position alluded to seal impressions.

In some cases, the dedicatory colophons are very laconic only indicating that the written artefacts were dedicated to the goddess Nisaba. A somewhat more informative colophon is the following example dating to the late third millennium BCE:

No. 1: Erm 15000 (Old Akkadian period, 23rd c. BCE)

1 ^dnisaba lugal-ušumgal dub-sar^l(ŠE) ensi₂ ṛlagaš^ṛ[^{ki}]

¹ To Nisaba. Lugal-ušumgal, scribe, ensi of Lagaš.

In this example, beyond the name also the title and the function of the scribe is provided in the colophon. The name of Lugal-ušumgal, governor of Lagaš and vassal of the Agade dynasty is indeed known from other inscriptions as well. Apparently, the present prism containing a copy of the lexical composition Lu₂ A was prepared by Lugal-ušumgal personally to dedicate it to Nisaba. Likely that is the reason why his name is supplemented with the function of *dub-sar* “scribe”. At least according to the present state of the art, no inscribed objects were offered in the name of a third person, but such votive offerings had been prepared by the donors personally.

The following example dating to the late third millennium BCE illustrates the peculiarities of the earliest colophons. This colophon has been preserved on a prism containing a list of personal names and it is most comparable with later dedicatory colophons, because it is the most elaborate representatives of this colophon type from the late third millennium, and also because it has been written by an apprentice scribe, thus its setting was also likely in scribal training.

No. 2: NBC 8495 (Ur III period, 21st c. BCE)⁵

- 1 ^dnisaba
- 2 munus zid
- 3 munus sag₉-ga
- 4 [i]-ku-un-pi₄-^dda-^rgan^r
- 5 dub-sar tur
- 6 dumu na-bi₂-i₃-li₂-šū
- 7 arad₂-zu
- 8 in-sar

¹ To Nisaba, ² true woman, ³ beautiful woman. ⁴ Ikūn-pī-Dagān, ⁵ the junior scribe, ⁶ son of Nabi-ilišu, ⁷ your servant ⁸ wrote it.

Dedicatory colophons seem to follow rules regarding their form and content as well as they use a specific formulaic language closely related to the votive inscriptions of the given period. Both colophons include the name and epithets of the goddess Nisaba as well as elaborate on the scribe who wrote and dedicated the manuscript.

The last example from the late third millennium should illustrate that the language of the colophon in this period was apparently adjusted to the language of the composition written on the manuscript. In this case, an Akkadian composition, the Names and Professions list from the northern Mesopotamian stream of tradition, was supplemented with a dedicatory colophon, also in Akkadian, even if it is only indicated by the fragmentarily preserved verb in the last line of the colophon:

No. 3: Private collection of G. Ligabue (Ur III period, 21st c. BCE)⁶

- 1 ^dnisaba
- 2 munus zid
- 3 munus sag₉-ga
- 4 ^rx^r-BU-[...]
- 5 dub-[sar]
- 6 arad₂-[zu]
- 7 NE-^rNE^r [...]

⁵ Unpublished tablet, colophon quoted by Veldhuis 2014: 70.

⁶ Published by Fales and Krispijn 1979–1980.

8 *iš-[tu-ur]*

¹ To Nisaba, ² true woman, ³ beautiful woman. ⁴ [PN], ⁵ the scribe, ⁶ your servant ⁷ [...] ⁸ wrote it.

In the Old Babylonian period, dedicatory colophons are rather rarely attested, but interestingly, the language of the colophons is Akkadian. These colophons address the goddess Nisaba together with her spouse Haya which might be a feature distinguishing late third from early second millennium colophons.⁷ Old Babylonian dedicatory colophons come from the context of scribal education as it can be ascertained based on the manuscripts and their contents. It should be thus contemplated on why the use of the Akkadian instead of the Sumerian language was favored. An explanation could be the rather elementary stage of education where these votive offerings belonged to, and thus junior scribes might be more familiar with writing in their mother tongue than in Sumerian, as they just started their training with mastering Sumerian vocabulary by copying and memorizing lexical compositions. Also, the distinction between the two languages is not that clear-cut due to the highly allographic nature of the Akkadian writing system in use. Apparently, it was most important that apprentice scribes produce the whole written artefact including the colophon by their own hand. The following example shows an Old Babylonian dedicatory colophon:

No. 4: NBC 2513 (Old Babylonian period, 20–16th c. BCE)⁸

- 1 *šu-niĝin 2 šu-ši 8 mu-bi*
 2 *ti-la*
 3 *^dnisaba*
 4 *^dha-ia₃*
 5 *be-li₂-šu-nu*
 6 *in-sar*

¹ Total 128 are its lines. ⁵ Belišunu ⁶ wrote it ² by the life of ³ Nisaba ⁴ (and) Haya.

This colophon has been preserved on a six-sided prism holding a school text listing various weights.⁹ The colophon was placed at the end of the text, in the last column, written with slightly larger script than the main text. Moreover, in the colo-

⁷ The god Haya was also associated with scribal arts, see Weeden 2009.

⁸ Published as BIN 2, 36. The colophon was edited by Hunger 1968 as No. 37.

⁹ See the description of the tablet in BIN 2, 51 No. 36.

phon no rulings were applied signifying that it was a different unit demarcated optically from the main contents. A very similar colophon has been preserved on another, broken six-sided prism containing a laws exercise.¹⁰ Though also on this prism, the colophon was positioned in the last column, it was not written continuously but divided into three units. The six-column tablet MS 4287 containing a compendium of legal forms also included a short colophon corresponding to ll. 2–4 of the one quoted above.¹¹ As these colophons are only fragmentarily preserved, I renounce here from quoting them, though they also certainly belonged to dedicatory colophons accompanying school texts.¹² Interestingly, all these examples invoke Nisaba and Haya and none of the prisms and tablets hold a lexical composition as usual in the late third millennium BCE. The practice was apparently transferred to specific types of school exercises including, but not restricted to legal exercises.

A further school text, a manuscript of the lexical composition Izi from the city of Isin confirms – even if in a corrupted form – that the same dedicatory colophons were in use in a further scribal center:

No. 5: IB 1600 (Old Babylonian period, 20–16th c. BCE)

- 1 igi ^dnisaba
- 2 [u₃]
- 3 [^d]e₂-a
- 4 i₃-li₂-e-ri/-ba-am
- 5 he₂-en-sag₉

⁵ May ¹ Nisaba ² and ³ Ea ¹ look ⁴ for Ili-eribam ⁵ with favor.

Interestingly, this colophon refers to Nisaba and Ea, the latter name may be a scribal error while the spouse of Nisaba, Haya was meant here.¹³

A very brief dedication preserved on an Old Babylonian literary manuscript, a copy of the hymn Išme-Dagan W [ETCSL 2.05.04.23] should be also mentioned here. The dedication was written on the lower tablet edge of UET 6, 118 and only contains the name of the two gods, Haya and Nisaba.¹⁴ It is possible that this anno-

¹⁰ YBC 2177 vi 1'–6', published as YOS 1, 28 edited by Hunger 1968 as No. 38. For an edition of the text see Roth 1995, 42–45.

¹¹ Published as CUSAS 43, No. 64.

¹² In this case, the composition was.

¹³ See also Wilcke 1987, 101–102.

¹⁴ As a contrast, the lexical manuscripts CBS 3918 + 3928 and N 5159 from Nippur only contain a dedication to Nisaba on the tablet's edge. However, both are manuscripts of the list OB ur₅-ra which used to end with a Nisaba doxology. Therefore, the interpretation and function of this abbreviated annotation might be different from that of dedicatory colophons.

tation is a very short form of Old Babylonian dedicatory colophons, or, an allusion to an established practice.

The sporadic material from the Old Babylonian period might testify a significant transition of the cultural practice of offering tablets to the gods: while in the late third millennium BCE, such offerings were addressed to Nisaba only, from the early second millennium BCE on, Haya and Nisaba received these offerings together. Nevertheless, these differences might result from spatial and not temporal differences, as our examples only capture a snapshot from Mesopotamian cultural history.

Unfortunately, the evidence from the Middle Babylonian and Middle Assyrian period, from the late second millennium, is not sufficient to conclude on the further development of the Old Babylonian practice. Nevertheless, after a further transformation, the practice of supplementing tablets of apprentice scribes with a dedication returns in the first millennium BCE.

Since the cultural practice that apprentice scribes offered their first written products for their patron was still widespread in the first millennium BCE, it is no surprise that the temple of Nabû ša harê in Babylon, the Eniggidrimalama was especially rich in tablets with dedicatory colophons dating to the Neo-Babylonian period. Cavigneaux (1981: 37–77) lists almost 150 colophons from this provenance, all written in Akkadian and all but one written artefacts dedicated to Nabû, one for the god Haya.¹⁵ From Sippar, the main center of the cult of the god Šamaš also tablets dedicated to this deity are attested. All these colophons are close to each other regarding their structure and style, they allow an insight into the rituals preceding the votive deposit of the tablets. The colophons are either placed in the last column or in the middle of the tablet's reverse, demarcated by a series of Winkelhaken. In a few cases, the colophon was placed on the lower left edge of the reverse. The line spacing, as it is also observable on scholarly tablets, is higher than applied in the main text.¹⁶

As of the structure of Neo-Babylonian dedicatory colophons, three non-obligatory parts can be distinguished: (1) a prayer to the god, mostly Nabû; (2) list of wishes concerning the well-being of the scribe and his family; and (3) an appeal to the tablet asking for its intercession in front of the god.¹⁷ Already these aspirations indicate that the tablets were indeed special artefacts.

The following example is a typical Neo-Babylonian dedicatory colophon on a pupil's tablet:

¹⁵ Cavigneaux 1981: 45, No. 37. The colophon is only fragmentarily preserved, though the name of the god and the donor is still readable on the tablet.

¹⁶ Gesche 2000, 153.

¹⁷ Gesche 2000, 153.

No. 6: Colophon on a tablet found in the temple of *Nabû ša harê*¹⁸

- 1 *a-na* ^d*nabû*(pa) *ap-lu*
- 2 *ši-i-ri* *bēlu*(en) *šur-b*[*u-u*₂]
- 3 *ha-mi-im* *ne*₂-*me-qi*₂
- 4 *be-li*₂ *nik-la-a-tu*₂
- 5 *a-šīb* *e*₂.^{ḡeš}*ḡidri.kalam.ma.sum.m*[a]
- 6 *bīt*(*e*₂) *ša*₂ *k*[*i-m*]*a šu-me-šu-ma*
- 7 [*na-di*]*n haṭṭi*(^{ḡeš}*ḡidri*) *u kussī*(^{ḡeš}*gu.za*)
- 8 [*a-n*]*a šar*(*lugal*)-*u*₂-*tu*
- 9 [^{md}*nabû*(a)*k-zēra*(numun)-*dan*(mu) *ana balāṭ*(tin) *napšāti*(zi)^{meš}-[*šu*₂]
- 10 [*p*]*a*²-*te-e* *uzni*(^{ḡeš}*tuḡ*₂)-*šu*₂ *ṭuppa*(im) *ištur*(sar)-*ma*
- 11 *iš-ruk* ^d*nabû*(ak) *bēlu*(en) *ši-i*²-[*ru*]
- 12 *uzni*(^{ḡeš}*tuḡ*₂)-*šu*₂*pe-tu*

For Nabû, the preeminent heir, supreme master, epitome of wisdom, master of ingenuity, who dwells in the Egidrikalamasuma, the aptly named abode, who bestows the scepter and throne which establishes kingship; Nabûzēradan, for preserving his life and opening up his understanding, wrote a tablet and offered it. O Nabû, supreme master, open up his understanding!

Dedicatory colophons on school tablets are important sources as they provide the most detailed accounts on producing and inscribing a votive tablet. To prepare a manuscript with such a special function required to dug up clay in a sacred deposit, in a “pure place” which was specified only in a single manuscript as the Garden of the Apsû, a garden in the vicinity of the Marduk temple in Babylon.¹⁹ Even the designation of the clay as *ṭīdu* relates the material with that of votive figurines and not with that of regular clay tablets.²⁰

Interestingly, the dedicatory colophon was the first element written on the tablet, maybe not written by the apprentice scribe who wrote the lexical excerpts on the tablet after, but his instructor or a senior student. This assumption is based on a find where only the colophon is written to an empty tablet.²¹ Somewhat more

¹⁸ Cavigneaux 1981, 49; 79.B.1/58.

¹⁹ Maul 1998, xiv–xvii.

²⁰ Gesche 2000, 155. She also mentions the implications of the holy clay, alluding to the material used by Ea in course of the creation of the world.

²¹ Gesche 2000, 155.

advanced scribes copied the pre-formulated colophon on the tablet's reverse.²² Finally, the completed votive tablet was deposited in the *gunnu*-container.

In some cases, dedicatory colophons indicate that the tablets were to set up in the temple. A scribal practice, namely tablets turned on their right edge instead of the lower edge, also attest for this possibility.²³

Beyond school tablets, also scholarly manuscripts or library manuscripts might include a dedication as part of their colophon. However, there are significant differences in the distribution of the material: while the practice of dedicatory colophons on school tablets is attested in the main scribal centres of southern Mesopotamia – Babylon, Borsippa and Sippar –, school tablets with dedicatory colophons are known from the library of Assurbanipal.²⁴ These northern colophons might follow the southern practice as they explicitly report on the tablets being dedicated to Nabû and either set up in his temple in Nineveh or donated to the temple library.²⁵ This deed of the pious king also alludes to the scholarly practice known from the earliest dedicatory colophons, nevertheless, this gesture seems to be unique in the first millennium BCE. The dedicatory colophons contain an elaborate intercession for the well-being of the king and the prosperity of his reign:

No. 7: Colophon of Assurbanipal, Typ o²⁶

- 1 *a-na* ^d*nabû*(na₃) *aplu*(a) *git-ma-lu*₄ *pa-qid kiš-šat šamêl*(an)^e *u eršeti*(ki)^{ti}
- 2 *ta-me-eh* ^{gēš}*lê'i*(zu.u₅) *ša-bit qān*(gi) *ṭup-pi šimāte*(nam)^{meš}
- 3 *mu-ur-rik u₄-mu mu-bal-liṭ mi-i-ti*
- 4 *ša₂-kin nu-u-ru a-na nišê*(un)^{meš} *e-ša₂-a-ti*
- 5 *bēli*(en) *rabī*(gal) *bēli*(en)-*šu*₂ ^{md}*aššur-bān*(du₃)-*apli*(a) *mi-gir* ^d*aššur* ^{dbēl}(en) ^d*nabû*(na₃)
- 6 *rē'u*(sipad) *za-nin eš-ret ilāni*(diġir)^{meš} *rabūti*(gal)^{meš} *mu-kin sa-tuk-ki-šin*
- 7 *mār*(dumu) ^{md}*aššur-aha*(šeš)-*iddina*(šum₂)^{na} *šar₄ kiššati*(ki.šar₂) *šar₃ māt*(kalam) *aš-šur*^{ki}
- 8 *lip lipi* ^{md}*sîn-ahhê*(šeš)^{meš}-*erība šar₄ kiššati*(ki.šar₂) *šar₄ māt*(kalam) *aš-šur*^{ki}
- 9 *a-na balaṭ*(ti) *napšātê*(zi)^{meš}-*šu*₂ *arāk*(gid₂.da) *ūmê*(ud)^{meš}-*šu*₂ *ša₂-lam zēri*(numun)-*šu*₂

²² Gesche 2000, 156 with the examples BM 68085 and Cavigneaux 1981, text 79.B.1/4

²³ Gesche 2000, 157.

²⁴ Another exception, from the periphery, is the manuscript STT 56 with a dedicatory colophon addressing the god Adad from Huzirina (Sultantepe).

²⁵ These colophons are, based on Hunger 1968, No. 327 / Typ n; No. 328 / Typ o; No. 338 and No. 339.

²⁶ Hunger 1968, 102–103 No. 328.

- 10 *kun-nu išid(suhuš) ^{ḡeš}kussi(gu.za) šar-ru-ti-šu₂*
 11 *še-mi-i su-up-pe-šu₂ ma-ha-ri taš-li-ti-šu₂*
 12 *la ma-gi-ri-šu₂ a-na qātē(šu.2)-šu₂ mul-le-e*
 13 *nēmeq(nam.kug.zu) ^de₂-a kalûta(nam.gala) ni-šir-ti apkalli(nun.me)*
 14 *ša₂ a-na nu-uh lib₃-bi ilāni(diġir)^{meš} rabûti(gal)^{meš} šu-lu-ku*
 15 *ki-i pi-i tuḫpāni(dub)^{meš} gaba-ri māt(kalam) aš-šur^{ki} u māt(kalam) akkad(uri)^{ki}*
 16 *i-na tuḫpāni(dub)^{meš} aš₂-tur as-niq ab-re-e-ma*
 17 *i-na girginakki(im.gu₂.la₂) e₂-zi-da bît(e₂) ^dnabû(na₃)*
 18 *ša qe₂-reb ninua^{ki} bēli(en)-ia u₂-kin*
 19 *a-na šat-ti ^dnabû(na₃) šar₄ kiš-šat šamê(an)^e u eršeti(ki)^{ti}*
 20 *girginakka(im.gu₂.la₂) šu-a-tu ha-diš nap-lis-ma*
 21 *ša₂ ^{md}aššur-bān(du₃)-apli(a) re-e-šu₂ pa-lih ilu(diġir)-ti-ka u₄-me-šam*
 22 *šur-kam taq-rib-ti TI [x x x x]*
 23 *lut-ta-id ilu(diġir)-ut-ka rabîti(gal)^{ti}*

For Nabû, the perfect son who oversees all of heaven and earth, who grabs the wooden tablet and holds the stylus for the tablets of destiny, who lengthens the days (of life), keeps the dead alive, who brings light to confused people, the great lord, his lord; Assurbanipal, the prince to whom Assur, Bêl and Nabû are gracious, the shepherd who tends the sanctuaries of the great gods, who establishes their constant sacrifices, son of Esarhaddon, king of all, king of land Assyria, grandson of Senacherib, king of all, king of land Assyria, for the life of his soul, the longevity of his days, the safety of his posterity, to strengthen the foundation of the throne of his kingship, to answer his prayers, to accept his supplications, to give into his hand those who disobey him, the wisdom of Ea, the art of the lamentation, the secret of the wise, what is fit for calming the hearts of the great gods, according to the wording of tablets, specimens of the land of Assyria and land of Akkad, I wrote on tablets, checked, collated and placed in the library of the Ezida, the temple of my lord Nabû, within Nineveh. Thereupon you, Nabû, king of the whole of heaven and earth, behold this library with joy, and for Assurbanipal, the servant who worships your deity, offer daily intercession (...) I will always praise your great deity.

Finally, an informative Late Babylonian dedicatory colophon written in Akkadian should be presented here to round up the overview of the material, testifying for the mostly unchanged survival of this practice up to the mid-first millennium BCE:

No. 8: MS 5007 (Late Babylonian period, 5th c. BCE)²⁷

- 1 *a-na* ^d*nabû*(na₃) *aplû*(ibila) *šit-ra-hu ra-šub-ba bu-kur*₂ {aš}
- 2 ^d*asar-re reš-tu-u*₂ *a-ša*₂-*red mah-ri na-ši*
- 3 *ṭuppi*(im.dub) *šimāt*(nam)^{mes} *ilī*(diġir)^{mes} *ša*₂ *ina nap-har kiš-šat u*₂-*taq-qu-u*₂
- 4 *ilī*(diġir)^{mes} ^d*i*₂-*gi*₃-*gi*₃ *bēl*(en)-*u*₂-*a-na-ku* ^{md}*šamaš*(utu)-*rīhtu*(tag₄[!])-*ušur*(pap)
māri(a) *ša*₂
- 5 ^{md}*šamaš*(utu)-*iddina*(mu) ^{lu2}*nuhatimmu*(muhaldim) {ras.} *ša*₂ ^d*šamaš*(utu) *u*
^d*a-a ina hu-du*
- 6 *lib-bi-šu-ia-na šēri*(edin) *u*₂-*šu aš*₂-*ša*₂-*am-ma ṭidu*(im) *el-*
- 7 *lu iš*[!]-*tu-ak-kul-lat qa-diš-tum u*₂-*bil-lam-ma*
- 8 *a-na kišādī*(gu)-*ia*₂ *ad-di*!(PI)-*i-az*₂-*bil a-na balāt*(ti)
- 9 *napišti*(zi)-*ia*₂ *a-na arāk*(gid₂.da) {meš} *ūmī*(ud)^{mes} *ana ṭu-ub lib*₂-*bi*
- 10 *ana tu-ub libbi*(ša₃) *bīt*(e₂) *abi*(ad)-*ia*₂ *kun-nu iš*[*di*(suhuš)-*i*] *a šullum*[!]
- 11 *zēri*(numun)-*ia*₂ *ṭuppu*(im.dub) *liš-ṭur lu-še-rib a-na!* *gunni*(gu₂.un!)
- 12 [*a-n*] *a k*[*a-ni*[*k*[?]] *dal-tum e*₂-*babbar.ra ṭuppu*(im.dub) *ina erēbi*(ku₄)-*k*[*a*]
- 13 [*x x x*] *x x* *ša*₂ ^{md}*šamaš*(utu)-*rīhtu*(tag₄[!])-*ušur*(pap) *māri*(a) [*ša*₂
^{md}*šamaš*(utu)-*iddina*(mu) (...)]
- (broken)

For Nabû, august, majestic and awesome heir, firstborn son of Asarre, foremost of all, who bears the tablet of destinies of the gods, whom the Igigi gods respect most in the entire universe, my lord, I, Šamaš-rihtu-ušur, son of Šamaš-iddina, the baker of Šamaš and Aya, with joy in my heart went out to the open countryside. I picked up some clean clay and brought it from the holy clay-deposit. I loaded(!) it on my shoulder and transported it. For my good health, for a long life, for well-being, for the well-being of my father's household, my own stability and my successful raising(!) of a family, I(!) wrote (this) tablet. I(!) sent it in to the *gunnu*-container, to the porter of the door of E-babbarra. Oh tablet, when you enter, [intercede(?)] for Šamaš-rihtu-ušur, son [of Šamaš-iddina! (...)]

The colophon preserved on this manuscripts is exceptionally long and informative. The ritual related to the preparation of the manuscript can be discerned on the basis of the detailed description, beginning in the morning with collecting the raw

²⁷ The transcription and translation follow George 2010.

clay outside of the city,²⁸ followed by the preparation of and writing on the tablet. The obverse of this manuscripts contains a poorly written and erroneous scribal exercise, a sign list. Maybe it is worth to note that despite the many details, the scribe did not mention what he chose to write on the tablet, eventually, the content did not bear much importance after all.

The Akkadian colophon on the reverse composed by the scribe completed the votive offering, though it might be the part written first on the tablet. The colophon was partly based on a well-known dedication formula, partly conveyed the scribe's own words.²⁹ The tablet, as the colophon informs us, was not deposited by the apprentice scribe himself in the Ebabbar, the temple of Šamaš, but he left it in the porter's box at the entrance. Both the quality of the manuscript as well as this description confirms that this votive offering, also in this era, belonged to an elementary stage of scribal education and was likely related to a rite of passage.³⁰

Dedicatory colophons have been composed up to the late Babylonian Period and document the survival of this cultural practice up to the end of the cuneiform manuscript cultures. Unfortunately, the immaterial aspects of this practice are gone forever. One can carefully assume that apprentice scribes did not offer their tablets on their preferred date but it was a coordinated ritual in course of a festivity related to the god of writing. Maul (1998, xv) proposed the 4th or 17th kislīmu, the second being an important celebration in Babylon where not only Nabû, but also the scribes or apprentices of the schoolhouse (*mār eduppê*) played a certain role.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Late third-millennium colophons do not show continuity in the scribal practice established by the mid-third millennium, but break new ground and draw their inspiration from another stream of tradition: that of the dedicatory inscriptions. The indeed high esteem of written artefacts manifest in this new practice: instead of providing votive objects fabricated from precious materials, scribes offered clay prisms and tablets written by their own hands. The value of these artefacts thus did not lie in their material value, but in the fact that they are inscribed with the cuneiform script and attest for the craftsmanship of the donor. These votive manuscripts were also the first step towards the practice established in the upcoming Old Baby-

²⁸ As George 2010, 277 pointed out, there are further rituals related to the production of artefacts from holy clay. On a universal namburbi ritual see Maul (1994: 485–486 ll. 19–20), on a ritual related to the production of apotropaic figurines see Wiggermann (1992: 12 ll. 145–150). These ritual descriptions provide some further details compared to the colophon. Beyond that, also incantations recited during these rituals survive, see KAR 134 rev. 15–20, Wiggermann 1992: 12 ll. 151–157 and Schwemer 2010.

²⁹ George 2010, 277.

³⁰ The technical term *tuppi mešherūti* “tablet of childhood” might refer to these or similar written artefacts signifying a beginner's level of competence (Cavigneaux 1999: 388).

lonian period, where beyond the individual message even a personal tone and style will be perceptible in many colophons.

The genre of dedicatory colophons survived beyond the third millennium BCE and even later, this cultural practice has been transferred to the Akkadian culture of writing. The last examples date to the mid-first millennium BCE, almost two thousand years after the emergence of the first representatives of dedicatory colophons. While these colophons are in most cases rather formulaic and repetitive, a few are indeed interesting and informative on corresponding ritual and donation practices which doubtless always belonged to in one or the other form to the production and deposition of these written artefacts.

The longevity of the practice also resulted in several transformations as it can be judged on the basis of the dedicatory formulae: initially, the deity concerned by dedications was the patron of scribes, Nisaba. In the Old Babylonian period, similar dedications were addressed to Nisaba and her spouse, Haya. After a longer gap, the practice revived in the first millennium BCE was related to various deities: beyond the Akkadian god Nabû, god of writing and patron of scribes, also Šamaš, Ištar or Adad could be subject of such offerings. Dedicatory colophons thus provide a fascinating example for the emergence and multiple transformations and adaptations of a cultural practice which survived for over a thousand years in ancient Mesopotamia.

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THE COLOPHONS OF ASHURBANIPAL, KING OF THE WORLD

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Colophons mark the constituents of what may have been the first attempt to assemble all significant written scholarly knowledge in one place. The 7th century BC cuneiform collection of Ashurbanipal of Assyria lets us understand intellectual life in the ancient Middle East. More than twenty different, apparently standardised, colophon texts have long been identified. It was also known that many of Ashurbanipal's tablets bore one. But these texts were incompletely reconstructed, and no-one knew how many there really were, how many tablets bore each, or how a scribe would have selected which to attach to any Library tablet. Now for the first time we can gauge more accurately the size of what survives of Ashurbanipal's Library, and identify meaningful groups within it. Some colophons were attached to particular types of text, while others were applied more widely. These reflect different streams of material flowing into the collection. They reveal depth and complexity in the collecting process.

ASHURBANIPAL AND HIS “LIBRARY”

Ashurbanipal was king of Assyria from 669–c.631 BC, and thus one of the most powerful figures of antiquity. Among his titles was “King of the World”, reflecting his unprecedented power. While he fulfilled the various roles traditionally expected of a king of Assyria, Ashurbanipal was quite unlike his predecessors. Not for him

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were the rigours of campaigning in distant lands: this he left to his generals. The king remained at home, taking care of the direction of a sprawling empire. The walls of Assyrian palaces were adorned with carved reliefs showing the king in action. Alone among his peers, Ashurbanipal customised the generic royal figure in these images to depict himself with a stylus tucked into his belt (see Fig. 1).¹ In his official inscriptions, he boasted of his scholarly prowess.² At his capital, Nineveh, Ashurbanipal assembled a vast collection of cuneiform learning. He had them labelled with colophons proclaiming their royal status. This collection is not only the single most important group of cuneiform texts ever discovered, it is also the largest and most diverse group of colophons from anywhere in ancient Mesopotamia, and probably from anywhere in the ancient world. The fact that, exceptionally, so many (clay) manuscripts in Ashurbanipal's collection bear a colophon means that even the absence of a colophon on a tablet may be significant for understanding its history and the history of the collection itself.



Fig. 1. King Ashurbanipal. Assyrian kings decorated the walls of their palaces with images relevant to the exercise of kingship. Uniquely, Ashurbanipal chose to have himself depicted carrying out his responsibilities with a stylus tucked into his belt. Detail of a gypsum panel carved in relief. Nineveh, Iraq. BM 124875. © The Trustees of the British Museum. Shared under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) licence.

¹ Seidl (2007). See further Livingstone (2007) for examples of Ashurbanipal's own handwriting.

² See further Zamazalová (2011).

Within a generation of his death, Ashurbanipal's collection was subsumed in flames as Assyria's palaces were looted and burned by foreign armies. When the remains of this collection were discovered in the mid-19th century, they were soon dubbed "the Library of Ashurbanipal". They have formed the cornerstone of modern study of ancient Iraq ever since. Archaeology was not yet a discipline in the mid-19th century, and the circumstances surrounding the removal of Ashurbanipal's Library to the British Museum at that time leave us with many unanswered questions. Being made of clay, the tablets of the Library largely survived the burning. But they had been smashed into tens of thousands of fragments, which scholars have now spent almost two centuries trying to reunite, with limited success. How many tablets did Ashurbanipal own? Where did they come from? Where were they stored? What did he do with them? The colophons on these tablets provide valuable evidence that allows us to start answering such questions.

COLOPHONS IN CUNEIFORM

The practice of writing cuneiform on tablets of clay has its roots in the late 4th millennium BC – colophons were the primary opportunity for scribes to express individuality. Clear examples of colophons can be found on some administrative as well as literary texts from around 2600–2400 BC, from the sites of Fara and Abu Salabikh.³ As many as fifteen individually named scribes played a role in producing a single manuscript. The fact that so many bear Semitic rather than Sumerian names forced the field to reconsider long-held assumptions about the populations living in ancient Iraq. Colophons from Ebla reveal local networks within which scribes and knowledge moved. A famous example notes the time "when the scribes came up from Mari [in Syria]".⁴

By the early second millennium BC, colophons became more common in scholarly texts. The inclusion there of information about the composition demonstrates that texts could already belong in larger series: thus, the colophon of a manuscript of the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, datable to the first quarter of the second millennium, reads: "Tablet II, 'Surpassing all kings'. 240 (lines)," i.e. it gives the ancient title of the text (its incipit, "Surpassing all kings"), the chapter number ("Tablet II") and the line count of the manuscript ("240 (lines)").⁵ In the second millennium BC, scribal training texts can be dated, even to a specific day. This offers a rare possibility to undertake a micro-historical study of education. Some bear the comment that they were written by a "female scribe", which shows us the training of girls in skills that belonged to a male-dominated craft.⁶ Later in the second millennium, a remarkable tablet from Emar in Syria tells us about the personal cir-

³ Biggs (1966); Mander (1986); Krebernik and Lisman (2020).

⁴ Krebernik and Lisman (2020) pp. 222–223 G1.

⁵ George (2003: 159–216).

⁶ See Lion and Robson (2005).

cumstances of a trainee scribe: “The hand of Ribī-Dagan, servant of Nabû and Nisaba. I w[rote] this tablet (when) I was placed in bronze chains during the period of [X].”⁷ Sadly, the details of the period mentioned there remain a mystery.

In the first millennium BC, colophons are found more routinely in scholarly texts, and they can convey a significant quantity of information. We find colophons marking private collections. The tablets from the house of the diviners in Ashur, for example, allow us to reconstruct the stages required to attain professional status.⁸ We also find colophons marking temple collections. These can contain curses against anyone who might damage a tablet, or stipulations on how long someone could borrow it for. Typically, whether from a private or temple collection, colophons note the provenance of the original from which the present manuscript was copied. Tablets deposited in the temple of Nabû in Babylon bear colophons recording the prayers of trainee scribes for their future health and success. Exceptionally, they provide a description of the sourcing of the clay used for these special tablets. They are also the only colophons decorated with borders made of wedge impressions.

Until recently, colophons received little attention in cuneiform studies. Ashurbanipal’s colophons were classified by Streck (1916), who labelled them *a–v*, but couldn’t interpret their significance. Leichty (1964) discussed the components of a cuneiform colophon more generally. Colophons from across cuneiform were gathered and analysed for the first time by Hunger in his dissertation (1968), which marks the beginning of the science of “colophonology” in cuneiform studies (so Borger 1969: 165) and remains the standard reference work. More recently, scholars have made isolated observations such as that there seem to be in Ashurbanipal’s collection two sets of tablets containing omens from entrails, one with colophon *b* and another with *l* (Koch-Westenholz 2000: 28–29), or that different colophons were attached to copies of the *Epic of Gilgamesh* (2003: 382–383). But we lacked knowledge of how many colophons existed, how many tablets had a colophon, which they had, and what their significance was.

ROYAL LIBRARY COLOPHONS

Colophons actually provided the original basis, in the early 1850s, for the identification of the Nineveh fragments as having belonged to Ashurbanipal. Many scholarly tablets bore his royal property mark. Scholars also soon recognised that other types of tablets dated from Ashurbanipal’s predecessors. And an explanation had to be found for the fact that tablets were found both in the North Palace of Ashurbanipal and in the Southwest Palace, which was originally built for his grandfather,

⁷ Cohen (2009: 128).

⁸ See Maul (2010).

Sennacherib.⁹ Suggestions arose that only tablets with colophons, or only those with specific colophons, belonged to Ashurbanipal. It had also become clear that some tablets had been deposited by Ashurbanipal in the temple library of Nabû, god of writing and royal patron. And ancient texts describing tablet production were to be dated instead to his father, Esarhaddon. How much of the “Library” was Ashurbanipal’s after all?

It has long been assumed that Ashurbanipal’s “Library” was an institutional library of sorts. While professional scribes would own collections written in large part by family members they were training in cuneiform, the royal collection must have formed differently. It was less personal, and the circumstances of manuscript production were less relevant, so such details were not included in the colophons. There is no evidence for public libraries: scholars wanting to consult certain texts had to apply for royal permission to do so.¹⁰ The closest phenomenon is temple libraries, where scribal families associated with the temple would each contribute to a shared resource whose works could be accessed and even borrowed by them.¹¹ It has been assumed that only Ashurbanipal had access to his Library, although no clear evidence has been adduced to support that supposition. Accordingly, Library colophons have traditionally been ignored, beyond signifying that the manuscript in question must have come from Nineveh. There are reasons to doubt this assumption, however. It is no less plausible that Ashurbanipal’s tablets could have been made available to scholars in royal service, or that the scholar-king could have shared access to his tablets as other scribes did with theirs; some of the colophons contain curses against “whoever takes (this tablet) away, or writes his own name instead of mine”, or the injunction that “Whoever sees (this tablet) should not treat it badly.”

The British Museum’s Nineveh collection consists of ca. 32,000 fragments, belonging to a number of tablets estimated to be between 2,000 and 10,000.¹² The *Reading the Library of Ashurbanipal* project¹³ has identified 2,170 colophons among the Nineveh fragments. This provides a minimum figure for the size of the (recovered) scholarly component of the royal collection. Previously, we could only estimate based on the number of fragments and an assumption (now demonstrably

⁹ See Reade (1998/2000) for the archaeology of Nineveh and the discovery of the tablets. George (2020) argues that the evident disarray in which the tablets were found was the result of looting and disturbance in antiquity.

¹⁰ Parpola (1986: 234 n. 60), Pongratz-Leisten (1999: 297–298).

¹¹ See Hilgert (2013) on the existence of temple libraries in Babylonia.

¹² According to Weidner’s much-cited estimation, the 25,000 fragments known at his time probably represented a total of 10,000 tablets, of which probably half were part of the state archive and probably another half part of the “eigentliche ‘Bibliothek Assurbanipals’” (Weidner 1952/1953: 198). For other attempts at measuring the number of tablets in the Nineveh libraries, see Frahm (2011: 276) and Fincke (2017: 209).

¹³ <http://oracc.org/asbp/rlasb/>

faulty) that the fragments would eventually join to re-form complete documents. Each colophon has been assigned to its type, as far as possible. The specifics of each colophon, the relation of each to the others, and the range of manuscripts to which they were attached all now provide evidence to help reconstruct the functioning of the collection. Strikingly, all colophons from the royal collection bear Ashurbanipal's name; none the name of his predecessors (or successors).¹⁴

Library colophons are found after the main text, on the reverse of the clay tablet, following a single – or occasionally, a double – ruling. In general, its lines are more spaced than the main text. It can be prefixed by further information. First can come a “catch line”, consisting of the incipit of the next tablet within a longer text composition (called a “series” in Assyriology). Next can come a tablet identification line, containing the “tablet number” (equivalent to a chapter number) and the name of the series. Then come notes to the scribal process, such as “written and checked according to its original”. Sometimes a count of the lines of text is provided as well.

STANDARD TYPES

More than 30 different Library colophons are now attested. Their distribution is uneven. Certain Ashurbanipal colophons are attested hundreds of times, while others are known from under 50 manuscripts, or even only once. Why would the royal collection have so many different colophons, each duplicated word-for-word on multiple manuscripts? There is actually far less variety than first appearance suggests. The five best-attested colophon types account for three quarters of all examples.

The single most common colophon (301 examples) is type *a* (see Fig. 2). It is the most concise, yet potentially the most pregnant with meaning. It says simply “Palace of Ashurbanipal, King of the World, King of Assyria”, and was applied to all types of text, as well as other objects in the palace. It is effectively an ownership label. What is remarkable about it is that most examples were clearly written after the clay of the tablet had dried, and thus some time after the main text to which it was attached had been completed. In three examples, the colophon is even written in ink, which is very rare in cuneiform generally (see Fig. 3). This is another indication that the tablet was already dry before the colophon was added. The use of ink was common at the time, but was typically used for writing the Aramaic language, using Aramaic script, and usually resting on organic materials. Cuneiform is not well suited to writing with ink, because of its three-dimensional nature; few inked inscriptions are to be expected. That notwithstanding, ink survives poorly in Iraq's soil, so we must consider the possibility that further examples are simply no

¹⁴ Some of the private colophons are dated to the reigns of Ashurbanipal's predecessors, in particular to his grandfather's (Sennacherib, r. 704–681 BC) and great-grandfather (Sargon II, r. 721–705).

longer visible. Colophon *a* is also distinctive, because most examples are written in archaising script. It is as though the scribes were presenting this colophon as carved in stone. No other Library colophon was written in archaising script.¹⁵ The text is also written in an unusually concise style, selecting few and simple characters.

There are several possible explanations for this suite of features. One is that these tablets were inherited from an existing royal collection (or Ashurbanipal's own, from the time before he became king). Another may be that they were written elsewhere, for other owners, and subsequently acquired by Ashurbanipal. They may thus provide a diachronic aspect to the Library. Ongoing work to identify duplicate manuscripts with different colophons attached may reveal the workings of the Library. Something that remains to be explained is the existence of 18 examples where the text is written in non-archaising script, on still wet clay.

Aside from the singular type *a* group, the next most common colophon type is type *c*, with 199 examples. It is probably to be understood as the default Library colophon, although many of the texts with type *c* colophons are magical. It reads (see Fig. 4):

Palace of Ashurbanipal, King of the World, King of Assyria, who trusts in Ashur and Ninlil, to whom (the god) Nabû and (goddess) Tashmetu gifted broad understanding, (who) acquired clear vision (and) the apex of scribal art, work which none of the kings who came before me learnt.

The wisdom of Nabû, cuneiform, as much as there is, I wrote on tablets, checked and collated and placed in my palace for consultation and my reading. Whoever trusts in you will not be shamed, o king of the gods, Ashur! Whoever takes (this tablet) away, or writes his own name next to mine, may Ashur and (the goddess) Ninlil wildly and furiously reject him, and make his name and offspring disappear from the land.

This type is appended to a wide range of different texts. Another very common type (with 108 examples), *d*, appears to be an abbreviation of *c*, used when limited space was available at the end of the tablet. A further 133 fragments belong to either *c* or *d*. Together, they are more numerous than type *a*.

¹⁵ Although examples of colophons written in archaising characters are known in other collections: see Maul (2012).

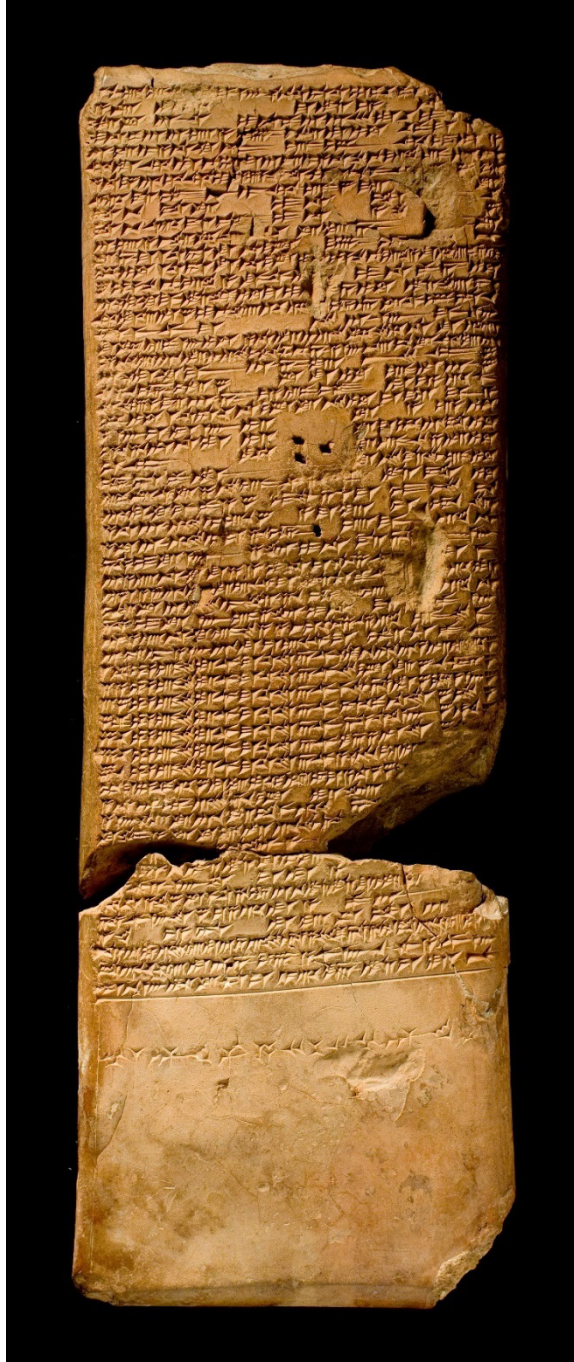


Fig. 2: A copy of the myth detailing Ishtar's Descent to the Netherworld. The short "colophon *a*" has been added. Nineveh, Iraq. K 162. © The Trustees of the British Museum. Shared under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) licence.



Fig. 3: The three surviving fragments bearing an inked version of “colophon *a*”. Nineveh, Iraq. DT 273, K 10100, K 6677. © The Trustees of the British Museum. Shared under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) licence.

Despite their prevalence, types *c* and *d* are rarely found on texts about divination (and none on divination by extispicy), although this is a common text type in the Library. Two other well attested types, *b* (112 examples) and *l* (66 examples), fulfil this role. The former is mostly (about two-thirds) dedicated to divination; the latter entirely so. Its wording includes that Ashurbanipal “learnt and internalised extispicy, secret of heaven and earth, wisdom of Shamash and Adad”. The historical differences between these two types remain unclear. Their complementary distribution with *c/d*, however, indicates that at least one of types *b* and *l* was planned at the same moment as *c/d*.

Type *b* is noteworthy in that it contains within the body of the colophon itself a reference to the source of the originals: “According to tablets and writing boards, copies from Assyria and Sumer and Akkad (= Babylonia)”. This is not very illuminating, since (clay) tablets and writing boards were the only forms in which cuneiform scholarship would be expected to appear. Oral knowledge “from the mouth of a scholar” was elsewhere sometimes cited as a source, but apparently on an equal level with written knowledge; there would seem to be little reason for the scribe to be excluding it here. And it would be surprising to find scholarly material deriving from somewhere other than Assyria or Babylonia, the heartland of cuneiform and home to its most prestigious centres of learning. Several possible explanations could be invoked. We might assume that the reference is to the group so labelled, rather than the individual tablets. The scribe could thus be summarising diverse origins, perhaps with the intention of indicating totality. It is not clear whether Library colophons can be interpreted in this way, however; other parts of the colophon texts refer to “this tablet” in the singular. If the reference is to the individual

tablets, the scribe would be recording that it was being produced as the result of an editing process involving the collation of multiple originals deriving from different traditions. The *modus operandi* of scribes is usually thought to have been to make a single copy from a single original, including noting when that original is damaged at a particular point. That being said, there are tablets where it has been plausibly proposed that the text includes variants from other sources. Some tablets from elsewhere even state that they are copies of multiple originals.¹⁶

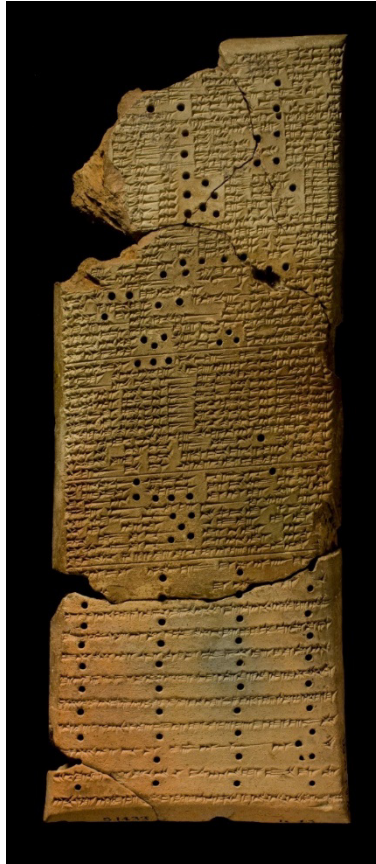


Fig. 4: An almost completely reconstructed tablet bearing the default Library colophon, “colophon *c*”. The text to which the colophon is attached is a copy of Tablet I of a series called *Maqlû* “Burning”. *Maqlû* was a ritual designed to release someone from the effects of witchcraft, sending the magic back to destroy the witches. This ritual is known to have been used in protection of the Assyrian throne. Nineveh, Iraq. K 43. © The Trustees of the British Museum. Shared under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) licence.

¹⁶ A colophon cites as its source “several tablets”, see George (2016: 172 No. 75).

LESS COMMON TYPES AND UNICA

Alongside the common, standard colophon types, there are less frequently attested types. These types are closely related to a genre or even a specific text composition. Type *q* is a good example (attested 44 times). It is very closely related to the default type *c/d*, but its content includes specific reference to the text composition to which it is attached, the *Nineveh Medical Encyclopaedia* (see Fig. 5):

Palace of Ashurbanipal, King of the World, King of Assyria, to whom (the god) Nabû and (goddess) Tashmetu gifted broad understanding, (who) acquired clear vision (and) the apex of scribal art, work which none of the kings who came before me learnt.

Recipes from head to the (toe-)nail, non-standardised selections, elaborate teaching, healing art of (the god) Ninurta and (goddess) Gula, as much as there is, I wrote on tablets, checked and collated and placed in my palace for consultation and my reading.

Type *g* was applied exclusively to copies of a pharmacological plant list called *Uruanna* (10 examples). This was a peculiarly Assyrian composition. Type *g*'s text explains in detail the editorial work of Ashurbanipal himself; he was evidently proud of his achievements. While a detailed study remains to be done, the surviving evidence could fit the picture painted in the colophon. Manuscripts of *Uruanna* date to the Neo-Assyrian period; some of the material in it is found in the Middle Assyrian period.

Beyond these are many types that are so rare, often unica, that they can hardly be considered "types" in their own right. An example is offered by type *t*:

Tablet of Ashurbanipal, King of Assyria, who [trusts] in Nabû [and Tashmetu.]
Whoever trusts in you will not be shamed, o Nabû!

Although a unique text, its phraseology mirrors that of other colophons. With the exception of content-specific material, Library colophon text is formulaic, sharing common frameworks and elements, repeated in different combinations. Type *m* is attested in three examples, all of which bear the literary text known as *Lugale*.

A footnote to the discussion of standard versus non-standard colophons is the question of cryptographic writings. In the cuneiform tradition, scholarly work was essentially anonymous. The main exception to this is the colophon, where the specific circumstances in which the individual copyist found themselves was the purpose. There was a long-lived habit of scribes occasionally employing unusual spellings in their colophons. Cuneiform signs could be used to write more than one sound or value, and spelling was not formally standardised. This gave well-read scribes the opportunity to flaunt their learning by using rare or atypical spellings,

perhaps to impress or frustrate their colleagues.¹⁷ Such spellings are known in the high scribal circles of Assyria (royal scribe Nabû-zuqup-kēnu is known to have used such spellings; see below), but they are absent from the Library colophons. A partial explanation for this may be found in the largely standardised nature of Ashurbanipal's collection. We can safely assume that the text of the royal colophons was discussed and agreed between king and counsellors. There would be room within such a scenario for some conspicuously learned or theologically significant spellings to have been chosen. Their absence might perhaps tell us something about the audience of the colophons.



Fig. 5: A tablet from a deluxe set of medical tablets, to which a dedicated colophon (“colophon q”) was appended. This is a copy of the third chapter of the eighth treatise in the so-called “Nineveh Medical Encyclopaedia”. It offers therapies for treating stomach issues. Nineveh, Iraq. K 61. © The Trustees of the British Museum. Shared under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) licence.

¹⁷ See, for example, Hunger (1990) and Jiménez (2016).

TEMPLE LIBRARY COLOPHONS

68 tablets from Nineveh bear a colophon declaring dedication by Ashurbanipal to the temple of Nabû. They indicate that there were at least two tablet collections at Nineveh: the royal Library and the temple library of Nabû. While tablets in the royal collection were labelled as belonging to the “palace”, temple library tablets belonged to an IM.GU₂.LA₂ (*gerginakku*), “library”.¹⁸ The question remains as to how many of the other Nineveh tablets once also belonged to the temple library. Their manuscripts have a similar outward appearance, in fragmentary form, to those of Ashurbanipal’s personal collection. What we know from other temple library collections leads us to expect that other individuals would have contributed material too. Candidates might be found among those tablets without colophons (of which few are known), or those with colophons naming individual scribes (for which see below). It is striking that no tablet found so far has a colophon indicating that anyone other than Ashurbanipal deposited them. It also remains unclear who would have had access to this temple library.

Several temple library colophons are known. Type *o* (40 examples) is the most common. It includes mention of the branch of knowledge of the lamentation priest; it is duly found on texts of that genre. Another 28 tablets contain other colophons, including type *n*, Hunger (1968) nos. 338, 339, and other fragments. They are attached to other types of texts, including word lists, hymns, rituals, and medicine.

IDEOLOGY

Some Ashurbanipal colophons contain long and complex prayers, comparable to those found in standardised literary prayers. In fact, some colophons were initially published as “prayers” (Walker 1972: no. 208), and only later identified as parts of long literary colophons (Hunger 1975: 317). The hymnic part of the colophon is particularly elaborate in colophons of tablets originally kept in the temple library. In most of these, the colophons contain long prayers to Nabû, often with strings of epithets and long precatory sections. For instance, the colophon type *o* (given in full as a text sample [in *Literary Snippets: A Colophon Reader*]) begins with the following prayer to the god of writing:

To Nabû, august son, guardian of all heaven and earth, holder of the writing board, bearer of the stylus of the Tablet of Destinies, prolonger of the days (of life), who gives life to the moribund, establisher of light for the people in darkness, great lord, his lord

¹⁸ According to Charpin (2007), *gerginakku* would designate the pigeonhole system used for storing libraries in some temples, such as the Sippar Library in the Ebabbar complex in Sippar. It is unclear if the library of the temple of Nabû in Nineveh included such a structure.

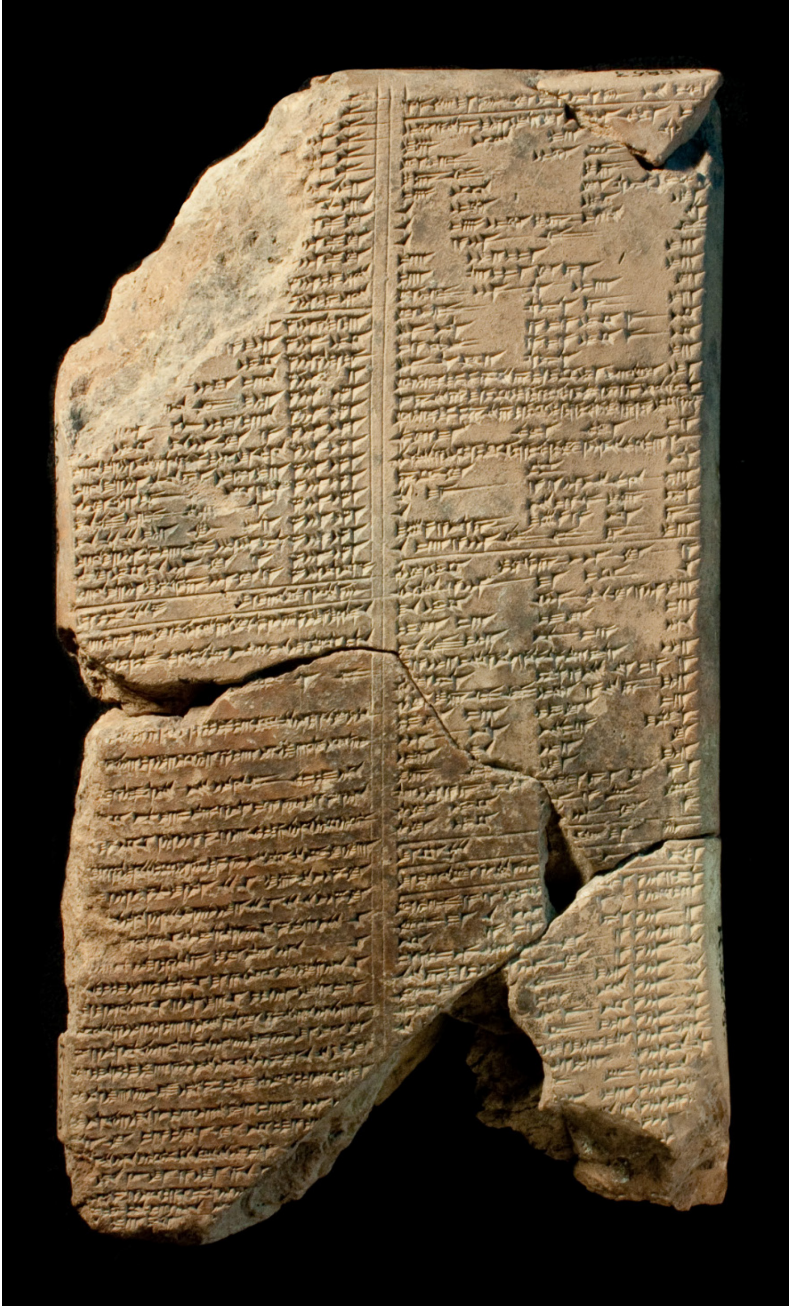


Fig. 6: A tablet bearing “colophon *o*”, indicating that it had been dedicated to Nabû, and placed in the temple library collection. It is a catalogue of texts belonging to the specialist field of the lamentation priest. Nineveh, Iraq. K 2529. © The Trustees of the British Museum. Shared under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) licence.

After the self-presentation of the king, the colophon continues with a series of wishes that declare the reasons why the tablet was written:

For his life, the prolongation of his days, the well-being of his family, making firm the foundations of his royal throne, the acceptance of his prayers, the granting of his petitions, and the delivery of his enemies into his hand, the wisdom of Ea, the lamentation-craft, secret of the sage, which is appropriate for the appeasement of the hearts of the great gods, according to tablets, copies from the land of Ashur and the land of Akkad (= Babylonia), I wrote, checked and collated (the text) on tablets, and deposited (them) in the library of Ezida, the temple of Nabû-in-Nineveh, my lord.

These sorts of long prayers are particularly common in Babylonian colophons from the second part of the first millennium BC (Pearce 1993). In fact, a common school exercise in the Babylonian curriculum was the writing of a square-shaped tablet containing a short lexical excerpt on one side and a long, elaborate colophon with a hymn to Nabû on the other (Gesche 2001: 153–166; George 2010). This hymn to Nabû described a ritual in the course of which the tablets written by scribal apprentices were deposited in the temple of Nabû as a present to the god: in the case of Ashurbanipal, the inclusion of such elaborate colophons in the tablets of his collection served to underpin his claims of scholarly proficiency.

PRIVATE COLOPHONS FROM THE LIBRARY

One of the most surprising discoveries from the Library is the group of almost 500 tablets bearing a colophon that did not name the king; many name a private citizen. The largest sub-collection among these private colophons belonged to Nabû-zuqup-kēnu, a royal scholar from the city of Kalḫu (modern Nimrud). These 130 tablets were originally written in Kalḫu, and date from the time of Ashurbanipal's great-grandfather (Sargon II) and grandfather (Sennacherib). Many of Nabû-zuqup-kēnu's colophons bear a date, which makes it possible to track and contextualise his interests over the years. On the basis of different handwritings and people named in his colophons, it is likely that many of his tablets were written for him by other scribes. The purpose of his colophons, therefore, was primarily to mark the tablets as his property rather than as his handiwork, although he did write some of them himself.¹⁹ The descendants of Nabû-zuqup-kēnu, who held high positions in the Ninevite royal court, presumably transferred his whole collection from Kalḫu to Nineveh after his death. His tablets might have served as models for the creation of new tablets.

A remarkable feature of these tablets with private colophons is that no scribe other than Nabû-zuqup-kēnu is named in more than a few cases; typically, only once each. The circumstances of their incorporation into the Library remain a mys-

¹⁹ See Washizu (2008), May (2018).

tery. A plausible explanation would be that these are among the tablets recorded in the so-called acquisition lists. In them, scribes detail materials arriving at Nineveh in 647 BC, following Ashurbanipal's capture of Babylon, capital of his southern neighbours.²⁰ Yet no correspondence between the tablets and these lists can be found. And no trace of those acquisitions can be found at Nineveh. Either they must be added to our estimate of the total size of the Library, or the Library was active for long enough after 647 BC for them all to have been copied anew, and the originals discarded.

THE COLOPHON SYSTEM

The logic behind the distribution of the colophons requires explanation. Firstly, given the standardisation of Library colophons, why does more than one such colophon exist at all? Secondly, why are some colophons very common, others much less so, and some found only once? Is it just an inevitable result of some having been attached to all sorts of texts, while others were more specific? Thirdly, why do some colophons apply across genres, while others are more specific? Why were only some genres, or even compositions, selected to be given their own colophon?

This must be an indication of different circumstances in the development of the collection, continued reflection on it, and planning of its structure. In other words, this was a living collection, with complexity of acquisition over a prolonged period. We might speculate that type *a* was the first, and originally the only, colophon. This would explain why it appears on texts of all kinds. In this scenario, we would assume that no colophon had been planned at first. The examples written after the clay had dried were retrospective marking. Perhaps these tablets were assembled while Ashurbanipal was still prince or crown-prince (672–669 BC). That Ashurbanipal was collecting already at that time could be argued with the help of a colophon (Hunger 1968: no. 345), which states:

Tablet 4 of the series HAR.RA = *hubullu*, for checking by Ashurbanipal, crown prince of Esarhaddon ... Aplaya, junior apprentice, son of Kenî, the crown prince's scribe, wrote and made available to the prince, his lord, as a prayer.

The ones written while the clay was still damp would be transitional, with these tablets having been produced after the decision to apply a colophon had been taken (and certainly after Ashurbanipal had been crowned).

Perhaps next came type *b*, the text of which is unusual in several ways. While most Library colophons begin with Ashurbanipal's titles, then lead into a description of his relationship with, and blessing by, the gods, type *b* instead lists his place in the Assyrian ruling dynasty (naming his father and grandfather), then describes the sources from which the tablet was copied. This is also the only colophon which

²⁰ See Parpola (1983). On Ashurbanipal's tablet collecting, see also Frame/George (2005) and Robson (2019: 124–127).

states that the tablet was placed in his palace “for his royal consultation” rather than simply “for his consultation”. We might see in these features someone already at home in typical scribal behaviour, but still feeling a need to assert his (new) status as king, and without the established confidence to proclaim his divinely-inspired brilliance. A second unusual feature is that this is the only colophon in which Ashurbanipal notes that his editorial work took place in the company of acknowledged, professional scribes; again, perhaps a sign of lower confidence. He writes there: “I have written, checked, and collated this tablet in the assembly of scholars”, where elsewhere he states simply that he “wrote, checked, and collated” the tablet.

We might place the Nabû temple library colophons around this time. Type *o* also recites Ashurbanipal’s lineage, and it specifies that its purpose was to firmly establish his rule, among other things. This colophon also includes a statement about originals similar to that found in type *b*: “copies from Assyria and the land of Akkad (= Babylonia)”. Type *n* also includes the lineage, but not the statement about originals. It describes how already “Nabû and Nisaba have given life and protected his kingship”. Hunger (1968) no. 338 lacks both elements.

Returning to the royal collection, type *b* perhaps was replaced by a new, more sophisticated default colophon: type *c* / type *d*. Type *c* differs from type *d* in having an additional four-line section with protective curses. It could be argued the *d* is an abbreviation of *c*, since there is no space on these tablets for the additional text of type *c*. However, given that scribes were accustomed to planning space, it could be argued that type *c* or *d* was chosen in advance and planned for accordingly. A possible argument in favour of this could be found in colophon type *q* (found on medical texts), which is identical to type *d* except for the section describing the material to which it would be applied. Indeed type *q* might answer another such question, this one around whether the variant (in both type *c* and type *d*) with or without the line stating that Ashurbanipal “trusts in Ashur and Ninlil”, is the original. Type *q* lacks it; presumably, so too did the original from which it was derived. Type *l* perhaps belongs alongside *c/d/q* as a replacement for type *b*. Its wording is not as close to these colophons as they are to each other, but the overall structure is the same. It is applied only to extispicy texts, while *c/d* never was.

Type *v* and Hunger (1968) no. 335 (10 examples) are perhaps a parallel to the Nabû temple library’s type *o*. It is attached to texts in the Emesal dialect of Sumerian used by lamentation priests. Type *k* variant (14 examples) is attached to commentaries, mostly on the astrological text *Enuma Anu Enlil*; they perhaps arrived together in a group. Type *g* is attached to plant list *Uruanna*, which was apparently the fruit of royal editorial work, and so merited its own colophon. A further 14 examples belong to closely related versions of the same colophon, many attached to the ritual text *Bit Rimki*. That leaves only a further couple of dozen examples of mostly unica without obvious explanation.

The reconstruction offered here is necessarily speculative, since the available evidence is limited to the scant information contained in the standardised colophons; and preliminary, since it represents the on-going research of the *Reading the*

Library of Ashurbanipal project. A more nuanced discussion of the data will be attempted elsewhere.

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SACRED AND PROFANE: COLOPHONS AND PARATEXTS EMBEDDED INTO THE TEXT OF MEDIEVAL SAMARITAN PENTATEUCH MANUSCRIPTS

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The manuscript tradition of the Samaritan Pentateuch is characterised by several specific attributes. One of these features is the use of intexts embedded into the text of the Pentateuch. These so-called “tashqils” provide an opportunity for the scribe to individualize a manuscript and to leave his personal imprint on a copy without changing the Pentateuch text as such. Two groups of tashqils can be identified: colophon-style texts providing primarily the names of the scribe and his client as well as the date of the copy on the one hand, short paratexts relating to the textual passage in which it is embedded on the other.

Even though the text of the Samaritan Pentateuch is not as perfectly standardized as its Masoretic counterpart it does not offer much space for its copyists to leave their individual imprint on a manuscript. Nevertheless, scribes of the Samaritan Torah found – besides “classical” colophons at the end of a text – a very specific way to leave comments about themselves and the beliefs of their community inter-

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twined with the holy text itself in form of a so-called tashqil.¹ This paper tries to describe the formation and the formal structure of such tashqils, to examine the language and the different textual genres documented among them and to scrutinise the special function of this special form of colophons and paratexts. The textual basis for this undertaking are specimens from 57 Samaritan Pentateuch manuscripts from the 12th to 15th centuries.²

The term *tašqil* is derived from the Aramaic root *šql* – “to raise”³ – and refers to texts that are embedded into the main text and formed by reusing single letters from it, combining them in the manner of a mesostic to form an intext.⁴ To this end, the sheet is prepared by ruling a “bed” for the tashqil, in most instances running perpendicular to the horizontal lines of the main text, occasionally forming a circle. As the Samaritan script separates the individual words by a dot, different width of a blank space between letters implies no difference of meaning. Thus, when writing the text, the scribe can single out letters from the Pentateuch text he is writing, insert them into the prepared bed, even if the spacing to the preceding letter is relatively large, and in this way produce a text to be read vertically, inter-

¹ Although some medieval Jewish manuscripts seem to show similar techniques to use letters or words from the Biblical text to portend to the name of the copyist, neither material form nor scale of these references are comparable to tashqils in Samaritan manuscripts in terms of the range of information provided by them and their graphic prominence. Nevertheless, two scribal features of Jewish manuscripts overlap partially with tashqils: First, scribes occasionally marked a whole word that matches their name, and second, they placed the words skillfully in a way that the first letters of the (not necessarily consecutive) lines constitute an acrostic; for both practices see Beit-Arié, “How Scribes Disclosed their Names.”

² Tashqils can, of course, also be found in more recent manuscripts. The present study is, however, based on a project under way on the codicology of Samaritan Pentateuch manuscripts until the end of the 15th century, based at the Research Centre for Hebrew Studies at the Leucorea Wittenberg, see online at <<https://samaritana.theologie.uni-halle.de>>. 68 manuscripts that are nearly complete or restored and date from the period 457/1065 to 901/1495 could be considered to date; 57 of these manuscripts contain at least one (be it only short) tashqil. For the majority of them, photographs or microfilms served as the basis of the work. In some cases, however, text editions from manuscript catalogues or other publications have to be resorted to so far; in these cases, the secondary sources used are identified.

³ Ben-Ḥayyim, “Whence the KNŠT MYH Samaritan Synagogue?,” p. 188, n. 7; Girón Blanc, “Tašqil,” p. 228. In the older research literature, they are also referred to as “cryptograms.”

⁴ The description and transcription of individual tashqils have been part of the scholarly interest in Samaritan Pentateuch manuscripts from its very beginning. More general, though tentative overviews of the phenomenon were carried out especially by Gall, *Der hebräische Pentateuch der Samaritaner*, p. LXVII, and Crown, *Samaritan Scribes and Manuscripts*, pp. 40–47. Schorch, “The Allographic Use,” pp. 6–17, focuses on tashqils in multilingual manuscripts.

woven into the fabric of the main text, using the same letters, but not being part of it.

In terms of content, form and codicological context, tashqils can be divided into different categories.⁵ A first obvious criterion of distinction, however, is the simple difference in amount of different details provided, and as a result of this, in length: “Main” or “major,” i.e. comprehensive and more complex tashqils of nineteen up to 137 words on the one hand are seen alongside “minor,” i.e. rather short ones of normally two to four, in rare exceptional cases even eight or eleven, words on the other hand. “Major tashqils” all have the same function and a very similar form. In the same way as conventional colophons, they primarily serve to give the names of the scribe and, if applicable, of the client, the date and the number of Torah manuscripts the scribe already copied. Before undertaking a closer reading of this prevalent and most widespread type of tashqils,⁶ the far more diverse spectrum of the minor tashqils shall be presented as it covers all the different genres known for tashqils.

MINOR SCRIBAL TASHQIL

In addition to or instead of the major scribes’ tashqils just mentioned, brief versions are occasionally used by the scribe to give his name or the circumstances of the writing process. As a rule, they are embedded into the passage starting with Exod. 15:22⁷ and follow a standard formula⁸ formed by the word מכתב – “writing” – and some short form of the name, e.g. מכתב אבי ברכהתה – “Writing of Abī Bārākāta”⁹ –, מכתב אברהם נסיאה – “Writing of Ab’rām the prince”¹⁰ –, מכתב מתנה הלוי – “Writing of Mattāna, the Levite”¹¹ – or מכתב בן כהן גדול – “Writing of a son of the High Priest.”¹² Apart from this tradition, there are rare cases of apparently spontaneous formations of tashqils that shed light on the place of manufacture. Three instances could be

⁵ It should be noted that no such distinction was made by the scribes of the manuscripts themselves; it rather follows criteria developed from a research perspective.

⁶ 52 out of 68 manuscripts studied so far feature a major tashqil.

⁷ The Songs of the Sea and of Miriam in Exod. 15:1–21 are traditionally written in a two-column layout in order to emphasise their poetic character. Some manuscripts extend this layout and use the free space between the columns for a minor scribe’s tashqil after and/or a “Victory tashqil” (see below) before the songs.

⁸ Ten out of the 68 “complete” manuscripts and two fragments use this formula; they date from before 610/1213 to 901/1496.

⁹ MS Nablus, Synagogue 1, fol. 85v, Exod. 15:22–16:3 (dated 606/1209). A fragmented parallel is extant in MS Saint Petersburg, NLR, Sam. IIA 20, fol. 1v, Exod. 15:22–16:3: מכתב אבי [ברכהתה].

¹⁰ MS New York, Public Library, Heb. 228, p. 182, Exod. 15:22–16:3 (dated 629/1231).

¹¹ MS Saint Petersburg, NLR, Sam. IIA 14, fol. 34r, Exod. 15:22–16:5 (dated 840/1436).

¹² MS Dublin, CBL, Heb 752, fol. 161v–162r, Lev. 21:1–12 (dated 740/1339).

identified to date: אכתב בעברתה – “Written in ‘Awerta”¹³ –, the fragmentary כתבתי זה – “I, [] son of Tāra, wrote this book on Mount Gerizim”¹⁴ – and במזבח אברהם ובקמת יעקב ובשער השמים ובמזבח יצחק כתב זאת הקצים – “At the Altar of Abraham and the Pillar of Jacob and the Gate of Heaven and the Altar of Isaac he wrote these sections.”¹⁵

Besides these scribes’ tashqils, that mainly provide information on the circumstances of the fabrication of the manuscript, twenty more “minor tashqils” were found in the corpus studied so far. They can be generally classified under the following further categories:

TASHQIL ON FORMAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE TEXT

Starting usually in Lev. 7:11, a tashqil highlights the spot on which the Pentateuch text is halfway through by the two words חצי התורה – “Middle of the Torah.” With an occurrence in 33 (out of 68) manuscripts going back to 19 different scribes, this tashqil is the most widely-used among the minor tashqils. At times, a special sign (“*qışsa* sign”) complementing the tashqil or standing on its own marks the precise location between Lev. 7:15 and 16.¹⁶ Once the text is found as a circular tashqil.¹⁷ The indication of the middle of the Pentateuch text runs parallel to similar notes in Jewish Masoretic Bible manuscripts.¹⁸

TASHQILS LABELLING PASSAGES OF THE MAIN TEXT

This category includes two minor tashqils. The first is found in several manuscripts in Lev. 27 and forms kind of a caption for the whole book of Leviticus by the words אהן ספר תורואתה – “This is the Book of Instructions.”¹⁹ The second seems to be less

¹³ MS Nablus, Synagogue 7, fol. 172v, Num 23,7–13 (dated 857/1453). In Samaritan tradition, ‘Awerta is a highly significant place, as the burial sites of Eleazar and Itamar, Abisha and Pinhas, the sons and grandsons of Aaron, are localized there; see Dar, “‘Awerta.”

¹⁴ MS Saint Petersburg, NLR, Sam. IIA 118, fol. 7r–8v, Deut. 1:1–2:7. Obviously, only a part of the name is lost. The fragment of a major scribe’s tashqil can be found in Lev.

¹⁵ MS Fribourg, KUB, L 2057, fol. 142r–143v, Lev. 15:27–16:27 (dated 901/1496). This tashqil represents the most extensive specimen of minor tashqils found to date. For a brief discussion of its contents see below.

¹⁶ See e.g. MS Jerusalem, NLI, Sam. 2° 6, p. 163, or MS Paris, BnF, Sam. 4, fol. 87v.

¹⁷ MS Saint Petersburg, NLR, Sam. IIA 60, fol. 2r, Lev. 7:11–18. (The very short fragment is estimated in Ktiv: The International Collection of Digitized Hebrew Manuscripts, to date from the 14th century.)

¹⁸ The *masora parva* of the *BHS* gives the “middle of the Torah by verses” in Lev. 8:8, the “middle of the Torah by words” in Lev. 10:16 and the “middle of the Torah by letters” in Lev. 11:42.

¹⁹ The earliest of the six examples for this Aramaic version is found in MS Cambridge, UL, Add. 713, fol. 151v, Lev. 27:10–19 (dated before 610/1213), the most recent one in the corpus studied in MS Fribourg, KUB, L 2057, fol. 158v, Lev. 27:11–21 (dated 901/1496).

common.²⁰ Placed in Exod. 12:1–11, the words ראש המצוה – “Beginning of the commandments” – label the opening of the laws concerning Passover, considered to be the first explicit commandments in the entire Torah.

TASHQILS COMMENTING UPON THE CONTENT

The most diverse group within the minor tashqils is relating to the topic of the text they are embedded in with regard to content, implicitly or explicitly. Thus, the passage that contains Gen. 43:27–28, depicting Joseph asking his brothers about their father, is summed up by three words: הכימה שאל באביו – “The wise man asks about his father.”²¹ The resolution of the incident of Judah and Tamar is commented by the phrase דיאנה אתשקע עשיד – “The judge was found suspicious.”²²

Short as they are, the comments found in these latter tashqils often convey Samaritan hermeneutics of the Pentateuch in a nutshell: Joseph, who according to Samaritan tradition is the forefather of the community, is honoured as “the wise man.” Judah, in contrast, eponym of the rival Jews, is charged with his false accusations towards Tamar and exposed to ridicule as a judge who does not stand up to his own standards. Read together, the two short tashqils do not just sum up the two respective stories of the Pentateuch, but beyond this, map the tensions between the two religious communities, also in their own time.

The central role of Moses as the one and only prophet in Samaritan theology is reflected in several minor tashqils dedicated to him. Especially interesting is the case of the passage mentioning the birth of Moses. This is the only text section found as yet spawning more than one kind of tashqil. Starting in Exod. 2:2, we find four times טיביו עלמה ומה אתילד לגבה – “Happy the world and who is born into it”²³ – taking up the motif of birth, once נביא נאמן תמים – “True, perfect prophet”²⁴ – highlighting Moses’ role, in a wording similar to other Samaritan texts,²⁵ and once (by

²⁰ To date, only two examples in MS Nablus, Yair Cohen (dated 889/1484), and MS Fribourg, KUB, L 2057, fol. 78v–79r (dated 901/1496), both written by Yāqob b. Yūsaf b. Miššālēma b. Yūsaf, could be identified.

²¹ See MS Jerusalem, NLI, Sam. 2°6, p. 51, Gen. 43:26–32 (dated 612/1215). The only known parallel is MS Istanbul, Topkapı Palace Library, G. Islami 101, pp. 83–84, Gen. 43:26–34 (dated before 598/1201), edited in Girón, “Cryptograms,” p. 40.

²² See MS Jerusalem, NLI, Sam. 2°6, p. 35, Gen. 38:24–30; here, too, a parallel is known from MS Istanbul, Topkapı Palace Library, G. Islami 101, pp. 70–71, Gen. 38:24–39:1, edited and discussed *ibid.*, pp. 41–43.

²³ See MS Jerusalem, NLI, Sam. 2°6, p. 75, and MS Dublin, CBL, Heb 751, fol. 80v, both in Exod. 2:2–10 and by the same scribe Abī Bārākāta, and the two fragments MSS Saint Petersburg, NLR, Sam. IIA 72, fol. 3v, and Sam. IIA 87, fol. 7v.

²⁴ MS Nablus, Yair Cohen (dated 889/1484), Exod. 2:1–10.

²⁵ See e.g. a prayer for the third Shabbat after Pessach, where Moses is called הנבי הנאמן והתמים; see Cowley, *The Samaritan Liturgy*, vol. 1, p. 301; cf. also הנבי הנאמן התם, *ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 571.

the same scribe, in another manuscript) משה אניר בו עלמה – “Moses, the world is enlightened by him.”²⁶ The latter insinuates a midrashic notion of Moses being the incarnation of primordial light and source for every other light; the day he was born, his father’s house shone in bright light, even the sun fades in his light.²⁷

Not just Moses and Mount Gerizim, two of the main pillars of Samaritan belief, are revered by tashqils, also other universal doctrines of Samaritan faith are intertwined with the sacred text. Thus, the list of Adam’s descendants to Noah, the first generations of humankind, in Gen. 5 is used as pretext to place the avowal: לית ממן לעלם אלא אלה – “No one is steadfast forever but God.”²⁸ A circular tashqil saying אשר לאשר ישמר קדשה – “Happy the one who keeps its holiness”²⁹ – gives extra prominence to the version of the Shabbat commandment in Exod. 31:12–17.

The texts of such commenting tashqils may also be taken from the Pentateuch itself and, in a way, create intratextual references. When the Torah depicts Aaron and Moses blessing the Israelites in Lev. 9:22–23, the tashqil puts in their mouth the words of the priestly blessing from Num. 6:24: יברכך יהוה – “YHWH bless you.”³⁰ The powerful intervention of God to save the Israelites from the Egyptian army in the Sea of Reeds in Exod. 14:19ff. is summed up by the Aramaic version of Exod. 15:3 (SP), apparently supplied from the Samaritan Targum: יהוה נצוהי קרביה – “YHWH is the victor of the wars.”³¹

While some tashqils occur repeatedly or even regularly,³² others have been found in one manuscript or by one scribe only, possibly illustrating an individual

²⁶ MS Fribourg, KUB, L 2057, fol. 65r, Exod. 2:1–5. A parallel not easy to understand can be found in a circular tashqil in the fragment MS Saint Petersburg, NLR, Sam. IIA 160, fol. 2r, Exod. 2:4–9: הו משה אניר בהו אלהים – “It is Moses, by him God is enlightened (?).”

²⁷ See e.g. the Arabic and Aramaic versions of the Midrashic work *Mūlad Mūši* edited and translated in Miller, *The Samaritan Molad Mosheh*, pp. 81, 105, 243, 261.

²⁸ See MS Nablus, Synagogue A, Gen. 5:10–23 (dated between 1320 and 1341 AD), and MS Dublin, CBL, Heb 752, fol. 8v–9r, Gen. 5:6–24 (dated 740/1225), both presumably written by Fi'nās b. Yūsaf b. 'Azzi. A similar wording can be found in a blessing spoken for a deceased person: לית ממן לעלם אלא אלה לגדלה (“No one is steadfast forever but God in his greatness;” see Cowley, *The Samaritan Liturgy*, vol. 2, p. 852.

²⁹ The earliest example is found in MS Jerusalem, NLI, Sam. 2°6, p. 119, Exod. 31:13–17 (dated 612/1215); five parallels and one variation going back to three more scribes are known as yet.

³⁰ See MS Fribourg, KUB, L 2057, fol. 132r, Lev. 9:22–10:1 (dated 901/1496), the only instance found to date.

³¹ See e.g. MS Manchester, JRL, Sam. 1, Exod. 14:19–23 (dated 608/1211), MS Cambridge, UL, Add. 713, Exod. 14:21–28 (dated before 610/1213), or MS Dublin, CBL, Heb 751, fol. 102v, Exod. 14:24–31 (dated 622/1225). The different spellings of נצוהי, נצוהי, נצוהי all reflect the same pronunciation *nāṣō*.

³² As for now, only four of the twenty minor tashqils occur with a frequency that allows to speak of a kind of tradition – the “Middle of the Torah” (33 instances), the “Victory tashqil”

creative invention rather than a scribal tradition. Such are חכימה מערטל – “The wise man was made bare”³³ – in Gen. 37:23–32, where Joseph is stripped of his robe of many colours by his brothers, אל שדי אל ראה – “Almighty God,³⁴ the seeing God” – complementing God’s revelation of his name(s) to Moses in Exod. 3:14–17, עליהם השלום – “Peace be upon them”³⁵ – as a blessing on Jochebed and Amram and their offspring in Exod. 6:20–28, יהוה הרפא מכל מחץ או – “YHWH is the healer from every stroke”³⁶ –, which affirms כי אני יהוה רפאך – “for I am the Lord, your healer” – in Exod. 15:26 from the surrounding text section.

The assignment of a tashqil to one category is, of course, not always clear-cut. A most interesting blending of the genre of colophon style scribes’ tashqils with the feature of a tashqil reflecting Samaritan exegesis can be found in the above mentioned tashqil “At the Altar of Abraham and the Pillar of Jacob and the Gate of heaven and the Altar of Isaac he wrote these sections.”³⁷ Without being named, the scribe is the grammatical subject here and we are informed of the circumstances under which he wrote these parts of the manuscript. The underlying subject of interest, however, is the place where he is working, namely the summit plateau of Mount Gerizim, which is referred to by four of its many epithets known in Samaritan tradition, thus underlining its multifarious importance as the most sacred site and one of the pillars of Samaritan religion in the Biblical past as well as in the scribe’s present time.³⁸

All minor tashqils except for the scribes’ tashqils have in common that they refer in some way to the respective passage of the main text or to their position within the manuscript and give the surrounding context a prominent appearance just by their layout.

(17 instances), the “Shabbat tashqil” and the “Book of Instructions tashqil” (7 instances both).

³³ Attested in MS Istanbul, Topkapı Palace Library, G. Islami 101, p. 68 (dated to the 12th century); quoted according to Girón “Cryptograms,” p. 40.

³⁴ El Šadday.

³⁵ Both examples are taken from MS Nablus, Yair Cohen, written by Yāqob b. Yūsaf b. Miššālēma b. Yūsaf in 889/1484.

³⁶ MS Nablus, Synagogue 12, fol. 84r, Exod. 15:22–16:1 (dated 750/1349). The wording alludes to Deut. 32:39 (SP): מחצתי ואנכי ארפא – “I have wounded, and I will heal.”

³⁷ See above, note 15.

³⁸ For the various religious semantics of Mount Gerizim see Schorch, “Mount Gerizim is the House of God.” The paramount significance of Mount Gerizim is also reflected in a special layout of Num. 34:1–12. Many manuscripts create an empty circle like for a tashqil and four empty lines extending diagonally away from it into four directions symbolizing the mountain and the four partitions of the land to be inherited. Yāqob b. Yūsaf b. Miššālēma places the tashqil הרגריזים – “Mount Gerizim” – into the circle in two of his manuscripts dated 889/1484 and 901/1496.

MAJOR SCRIBES' TASHQILS

Placement within the text of the Torah is less significant for major scribes' tashqils, though not completely arbitrary. As a rule, they can be found in Deuteronomy, with a majority starting right at its beginning or in Deut. 6:10.³⁹ Exceptions from this rule are preserved in seven manuscripts written by members of priestly (including Levitical) families. They show that in some cases tashqils of priestly scribes are entered into passages dealing with prescriptions for priests, not just in Deuteronomy, but also in Leviticus or Exodus.⁴⁰

Major scribes' tashqils are composed of a number of recurring components. The core is formed by (a) the name of the scribe, (b) the name of the client (if applicable) and (c) the date. Two of the earliest specimens may illustrate this basic structure:

אנא ישמעאל בר יוסף כהנה כתבת הדה ארהותה לאברהם בר צדקתה בר קבאצא שנת (1)
 ארבע מואן וחמשים ושבעת שנים למלכות ישמעאלאי – "(a) I, Yišmā'el bar Yūsaf the
 priest, wrote this Torah (b) for Ab'rām bar Šidqāta bar Qabbāša (c) (in) the year
 457 of the Ishmaelite reign."⁴¹

הדה ארהותה כתבה פינחס בן אלעזר בן נתנ[א]ל בן אלעזר הכהן הגדול בשנת שלש (2)
 ושבעים וחמש מאות למלכות ישמעאל – "This Torah, (a) Fi'nās ban Ēlāzar ban
 Nātan'il ban Ēlāzar the High Priest wrote it (c) in the year 573 of the reign of
 Ishmael."⁴²

The only difference of importance between these two is – apart from the individual specifications – the word order; whereas in the first case the scribe is not only the grammatical subject, but is also in the focus due to his position at the beginning of the clause, in the second it is the Torah that is given more prominence. These are the two basic syntactic patterns that determine the opening of all major scribes' tashqils. The vast majority begins with the formula אנא\אנה\אני\אנכי ... כתבת\כתבתי

³⁹ Out of the 51 large scribes' tashqils examined here, 25 begin in Deut. 1:1, nine (going back to three different scribes) in Deut. 6:10, other starting points being Deut. 5:17 (SP); 6:2; 9:4; 10:8; 15:7; 26:1.

⁴⁰ Besides two tashqils starting at the mentioned verse Deut. 5:17 (in the Samaritan version of the Pentateuch containing the Gerizim commandment) and one starting in Deut. 10:8, three tashqils have been found beginning in Lev. 21:10, two in Lev. 16:2 and one each in Lev. 21:1 and Exod. 15:2. One tashqil placed, with the same symbolic intention, in Deut. 26:1, was not written by a member of a priestly family, but on behalf of a member of a priestly family.

⁴¹ MS Nablus, Synagogue 21, fol. 277r–280v, Deut. 1:1–2:20.

⁴² MS Nablus, Synagogue 2, fol. 191v–194r, 195v, Deut. 1:1–2:25; 3:14–19. 457 AH corresponds to 1064/65 AD.

... כתבה (קדישתה) זאת התורה הקדושה ...”⁴³ An opening clause inverting the word order is much rarer and occurs in variants of the two formulas ... כתב הדה ארהותה קדישתה ..., i.e. verb – object – subject, and הדה ארהותה ... כתבה, i.e. object – verb + object suffix – subject.⁴⁴ An exception from this rule can be found in two cases only, where the setting described is exceptional to the standard situation as two scribes shared the work on one manuscript.⁴⁵ Passive voice is used in one of them and the standard structure of “scribe – client – date” is shifted into “client – date – dedicatee – scribes”:

(3) אכתב אהן כתבה קדישה לכנשת עצאפה בשנת ב וס וה מואן למלכות ישמעאל משם אבי ברכאתיה צדקתה בר אב חסדיה אברהם בר חדותה ואכתב באדי יהושע בר לוי דמן – This holy book was written (b¹) for the Synagogue of ‘Aṣfe (c) in the year 562 of the reign of Ishmael (b²) on behalf of the father of the blessings Ṣidqāta, son of the father of mercy Ab'rām bar 'Ādūta. (a) It was written by Yē'ūša bar Lībi, out of the priests of Gērar (i.e. Ashqelon) – the first half, and the last half by Šālāma bar Ab'rām bar Yūsaf Ṣarfātā.”⁴⁶

Beyond the basic elements as represented in examples (1) and (2), major tashqils can draw from a pool of different extension modules that developed over time. The scribes' tashqils by Abī Bārākāta belong to the earliest specimen containing first extending elements, namely (d) information about the number of manuscripts already written and (e) a blessing of God:

(4) אנה אבי ברכהתה בר אב זהותה בר אב נפושה בר אברהם צרפתאה כתבת הדה אורהותה קדישתה לכהנה אלעזר דמן כהני כנשת שכס בר אב יצחק בר אנוש בשנת ו וו מואן למלכות ישמעאל והיא מלוי ה זכ אורואן כתבת רב חילה דכן סעד – (a) I, Abī Bārākāta bar Ab Zā'ūta bar Ab Nibbūša bar Ab'rām Ṣarfātā, wrote this Holy Torah (b) for the priest Ēlāzar, who belongs to the priests of the synagogue of Shechem, son of Yē'šaq ban Īnoš (c) in the year 606 of the reign of Ishmael. (d) And it is the

⁴³ Among the 46 examples that preserved the opening passage, 38 attest to this formula. Variation is possible between the Hebrew and Aramaic forms and their orthographic variants. Besides “pure” forms like ... כתבת ... אנה and ... כתבתי ... אני also mixed variants are found like ... כתבת זאת התורה ... אני ... כתבתי זאת התורה ... אנה or ... כתבתי הדה ארהותה ... אני. For the languages in tashqils see below.

⁴⁴ Four examples have been found to date for the first formula, three for the second, smaller orthographic variants included.

⁴⁵ See MS Cologny, Fondation Martin Bodmer, Cod. Bodmer 23, Deut. 6:10–24:15 (fragmentary) and the example given next.

⁴⁶ MS New York, Spiro Collection, Katava Kadisha 01A114–13205, col. 26–33, Deut. 1:1–8:6. 562 AH corresponds to 1166/67 AD.

completion of 25 Torah (manuscripts) I wrote. (e) Great is the Mighty One who helped (to do) so.”⁴⁷

A comparison of the six extant major tashqils by Abi Bārākāta illustrates that while the basic pattern runs parallel in each of them, his repertoire of enhancing text modules becomes richer with increasing experience. 25 manuscripts and twenty years later, his scribe's tashqil reads as follows:

(5) אנה אבי ברכהתה בר אב זהותה בר אב נפושה בר אברהם צרפתאה כתבת הדה אורהותה קדישתה לסמוכה אב חסדה בר סמוכה נפושה בר יצחק שנת שנים ועשרים ושש מאות למלכות ישמעאל והיא מלוי חמשים אורהואן כתבת אודה את יהוה ואשול לה ימלינה – (a) I, Abi Bārākāta bar Ab Zā'ūta bar Ab Nibbūša bar Ab'rām Ṣarfātā, wrote this Holy Torah (b) for the supporter Ab Isda, son of the supporter Nibbūša bar Ye'šāq (c) in the year 622 of the reign of Ishmael. (d) And it is the completion of 50 Torah (manuscripts) I wrote. (e) I praise YHWH and (f) ask Him may He qualify him (i.e. the client) to teach in it sons and sons of sons. Amen.”⁴⁸

The blessing was extended by (f) a short prayer for a long and fulfilled life of the client which at the same time sheds light on one of the functions of the Torah manuscripts – instruction and education. Beyond this, Abi Bārākāta embellishes the names of the client and one of his ancestors by an honorific title. This phenomenon is growing almost exuberantly in some of the tashqils of later scribes:

(6) אני עפיף בן צדקה בן יעקב בן צדקה בן אב חסדה בן עבד יהוה דמבני מוניס הכתוב במצרים כתבתי זאת התורה הקדושה על שם סהבה ויקירה ואקר טוב וקראה וצלאה וחשובה וכתובה ויעודה וסמוך קהלה וארכון קהלה ועשה טבאתה וזקן ישראל צדקה בן סהבה ויקירה ואקר טוב וקראה וצלאה וחשובה וכתובה וסמוך קהלה וארכון קהלה ועשה טובה ומסכינה אברהם בן סהבה ויקירה וקרא וצלאה וחשובה וכתובה וסמוך קהלה וארכון קהלה ועשה טובה ומסכינה יוסף דמבני עבדה יהוה ישימה מברכה עליו וילמד לגבה בנים ובני בנים אמן שנת צ וח ק לממלכת בני ישמעאל והיא מלוי ג ול ארואן כתבתי מודאה – (a) I, 'Afif ban Ṣidqa ban Yāqob ban Ṣidqa ban Ab Isda ban 'Ābəd YHWH of the Mūnis family, the scribe in Egypt (i.e. Cairo), wrote this Holy Torah (b) on behalf of the elder, the honourable, the good root, the reader, the praying man, the calculator, the scribe, the knowing man, the support of the community, the leader of the community, the benefactor, the elder of Israel Ṣidqa, son of the elder, the honourable, the good root, the reader, the praying man, the calculator, the scribe, the support of the community, the leader of the community, the benefactor, the poor Ab'rām, son of the elder, the honourable, the reader, the praying man, the calculator, the scribe, the support of the community, the leader of the community, the benefactor, the poor Yūsaf of the 'Abda family –

⁴⁷ MS Nablus, Synagogue 1, fol. 218r–223r, Deut. 6:2–9:24. 573 AH corresponds to 1177/78 AD.

⁴⁸ MS Dublin, CBL, Heb 751, fol. 258r–265r, Deut. 1:1–4:8. 622 AH corresponds to 1225 AD.

(f) may YHWH lay a blessing on him and may he teach in it sons and sons of sons, Amen – (c) in the year 890 of the reign of the Ishmaelites. (d) It is the completion of 33 Torah (manuscripts) I wrote. (e) Thanks to God alone. (g) Its parchment (stems) from a slaughtering in Egypt.”⁴⁹

The most striking difference in relation to the preceding texts is the abundance of titles that literally shower the client and each of his ancestors with honour. A thorough comparison of the six surviving main tashqils by ‘Afif ban Šidqa⁵⁰ shows clearly that these honorific titles were highly standardised and usually do not provide any individualized information about the respective person. Apart from the names, the texts are identical except for a few interchanges or omissions. An example taken from the passage introducing the name of the client may illustrate the degree of congruence of the honorific titles:

	והשובה וכתובה	ואקר טוב וקראה וצלאה	ויקירה	[...] לסהבה טבה	18 th MS
	והשובה וכתובה		יקירה	[...] על שם	19 th MS
			יקירה	[...] על שם	28 th MS
	והשובה וכתובה	ויעדוה	ואקר טוב וקראה וצלאה	[...] על שם סהבה	29 th MS
	והשובה וכתובה		ואקר טוב וקראה וצלאה	[...] על שם סהבה	31 st MS
ויעדוה	והשובה וכתובה		ואקר טוב וקראה וצלאה	[...] על שם סהבה	33 rd MS
[...]	ואבי אלמנה ויתומה		ועשה טובה	וסמוך קהלה וארכון קהלה	
[...]				וסמוכה רבה וארכונה	
[...]	ושמור ארהותה קדישתה	וקראה וצלאה		וסמוך קהלה וארכונה	
[...]			ועשה טובה	וסמוך קהלה וארכון קהלה	
[...]			ועשה טובה	וסמוך קהלה וארכון קהלה	
[...]	וזקן ישראל		ועשה טבאתה	וסמוך קהלה וארכון קהלה	

⁴⁹ MS Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, or. fol. 534, fol. 235v–251v, Deut. 6:10–20:3. 890 AH corresponds to 1485 AD. This manuscript is a Hebrew-Arabic biglot; parallel to the Neo-Samaritan Hebrew tashqil quoted here, an Arabic version of the text runs embedded into the Arabic column.

⁵⁰ Besides the cited 33rd MS these are MS East Lansing, Michigan State University, Chamberlain-Warren Collection 2484 (18th MS; cited according to Anderson, *Studies in Samaritan Manuscripts*, pp. 24f.), MS Saint Petersburg, NLR, Sam. IIA 15 (19th MS), MS Cambridge, Trinity College, R. 15.54 (29th MS), MS East Lansing, Michigan State University, CW 2478a (31st MS; cited according to Anderson, *ibid.*, p. 17). The 28th MS is owned privately. A microfilm bearing the callnumber F 31472 and naming the owner as Zadok ben Avisha ha-Cohen is available at the Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts at the National Library of Israel in Jerusalem. Two more manuscripts by ‘Afif survived. The 15th, MS Sassoon 403 (microfilm F 9350 at the IMHM), he wrote for himself, therefore the tashqil is hardly comparable to the others. His 22nd manuscript is MS Manchester, JRL, Samaritan 376 (33) (formerly Sassoon 404). It contains a colophon at the end of the book very similar to the tashqils, but in large parts pasted over and restored by a late hand.

The only epithets that seem to reflect authentic characteristics of the respective client are found at the very end: זקן ישראל – “the elder of Israel” – (33rd MS), ואבי אלמנה ויתומה – “father of the widow and the orphan” – (18th MS) and ושמור ארהותה – “guard of the Holy Torah” – (28th MS).

The note at the end of example (6), labelled here as (g), is ambiguous; clear, however, is the intention to provide information about the origin of the material used for the manufacture of the book.⁵¹ In six of his manuscripts, Afif gives the place of origin as “Egypt,” in one as המקום – “the Place,” i.e. Mount Gerizim.

Comparing the dating in the examples given so far, a very subtle difference can be noticed: Whereas (1), (2) and (5) give the number of the year in words, (3), (4) and (6) use the shorter form of ciphers in form of the Hebrew letters or a combination. But the dating leaves even more margin for variation. As a rule, Samaritan documents are dated according to the Muslim calendar, normally referred to as “the reign of Ishmael/the Ishmaelites,” sometimes also as “the reign of the sons of Hagar” or as “the reign of the nations of impurity.”⁵² In some instances, however, the scribes chose different calendric systems, especially the “Creation of the world,” the “Exodus from Egypt” or the “Settlement of the Israelites in Kanaan.”⁵³ The following example assembles more than one of them:

(7) אני אברהם בר יהושע בר מונס הכהן כתבתי זאת התורה הקדושה בסעדות יהוה נשא עון ופשע בשנת ו ול ושבע מאות לממלכות בני ישמעאל היא שנת אלפים ומאתים ושבע ועשרים שנה למפוק בני ישראל ממצרים היא שנת חמשת אלפים ושבע מאות ושנים – (a) I, Ab'rām bar Yē'ūša bar Mūnis the priest, wrote this Holy Torah (h) with the help of YHWH (who) forgives iniquity and transgression⁵⁴ (c) in the year 736 of the reign of the Ishmaelites, which is the year 2227 of the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt, which is the year 5780 of the creation of the world. (e) Praised be the name of YHWH.”⁵⁵

⁵¹ The translation is based on the Arabic version of the tashqil (see note 48) that reads רקאה רקהא, מן דביה מצר, with رقهأ corroborating the interpretation “parchment” (against “leather,” potentially referring to the cover of the book) and ذبيح supporting the meaning “slaughtering” (against “sacrifice”).

⁵² לממלכת עמי נדס. The etymology of the term עמי נדס is not clear. Shehadeh, “The Arabic of the Samaritans,” p. 563, reads נדס as a metathesis of دنس – “uncleanness, dirt.” Shapira/Vasyutinski, “אוסף שומרני חדש בקיב,” p. 223, derive it from Arabic نجس – “impurity, uncleanness.”

⁵³ For the different eras used for Samaritan dating see Powels, “The Samaritan Calendar,” pp. 716–21.

⁵⁴ The formula “with the help of YHWH (who) forgives iniquity and transgression” is unique in the corpus studied, the epithet of God is known from the Torah (Exod. 34:7; Num. 14:18).

⁵⁵ MS Nablus, Synagogue 5, fol. 226v–241r, Lev. 16:2–23:9. 736 AH corresponds to 1335/36 AD.

The triple dating offers no apparent advantages in terms of accuracy; the references rather help to contextualize the manuscript and its scribe within the horizons of Samaritan historical identity.

The broadest scope for poetic license and scribal creativity can be found in the expressions of gratitude towards God, the requests or prayers for the well-being of the client and his family as well as that of the scribe.

(8) אני אבישע בן פינחס בן אבישע בן פינחס בן יוסף הכהן הגדול במקום כתבתי זאת התורה הקדושה ביכולת יהוה וברכהתו על שם סמוך קהלה וארכונה ויקירה וצלאה וקראה סעד יהוה בר סהבה ויקירה וסמוך קהלה וארכונה צדקתה בן סמוך קהלה וארכונה ויקירה אבי מרוממאתה דמבני שמטימה השכונים בשכם בשנת ז ונ וחק לממלכות ישמעאל היא שנת ה אלף וחק ה וצ לברית עלמה תהיה בריכה עליו וברכתה ומה בה מן המלים הקדושים והשמות הנכבדים יתן לו יהוה בנים יתלמדו בה וילמדו בה בניו בני בניו אמן בעמל משה הנאמן והיא מלוי ד ארואן כתבתי אודי את יהוה על בן סעד ואשול מן מרי ימלא בהיה – “(a) I, Ābiša ban Fī'nās ban Ābiša ban Fī'nās ban Yūsaf, the High Priest at the Place (i.e. Mount Gerizim), wrote this Holy Torah (h) through the power of YHWH and His blessing (b) on behalf of the support of the community, the leader, the honourable, the praying man Sā'əd YHWH, son of the elder, the honourable, the support of the community, the leader Šidqāta, son of the support of the community, the leader, the honourable Abī Amrūmēmāta from the Šamtimma family who reside in Shechem (c) in the year 857 of the reign of Ishmael, which is the year 5895 of the creation of the world. (f¹) May it be blessed for his sake. And through its blessing and through the holy words and the honoured names that are in it, YHWH shall provide that sons will be taught in it, and they may teach their sons and grandsons. Amen. (i) For the merit of Moses, the faithful. (d) It is the completion of four Torah (manuscripts) I wrote. (e) I thank YHWH for having helped with this (f²) and ask from my Lord, may he bestow him with goodness. Amen. (i) *I am who I am*. (Exod. 3:14)”⁵⁶

This text features some of the common phrases in slightly modified form as for instance the thanksgiving (e); the blessing (f) as it is found in (5) and other tashqils is split into two separate blessings (f¹) and (f²).

The relative stability of the scribes' tashqils may not only be illustrated by comparison of similar texts, but also by their confrontation with the only main tashqil from the corpus radically deviating from any of the others in many respects:

(9) דכיר לטב עד לעלם עבוד טבאתה ופעל הזכרון הטב בכל אתר מנחג מים חיים אל בית הצלו הירא מיהוה השרי בהר סיני ועמד עליו בצלואן ותשבחן ושב בשלום להר גריזים יברכו יהוה וישים לו יכלו על עמל הזכרון הטב דן האיש הכוכב היאיר השמש המניר הזהר התמים האקר הטב דמע האקרים דתולדת אבוה מבני איקרה ותולדת אמה מבנות קהלה ארכון עדת השמרים סמוך קהל עבראותה נבון הנבונים נתון המתנות הגביר השלם הגמר הריטור

⁵⁶ MS Nablus, Synagogue 7, fol. 134r–150v, Lev. 21:10–Num. 6:21. 857 AH corresponds to 1453 AD.

אברהם בר סמוכה וארכונה אב נפושא בר ישמעאל אתחסל הדה ארהותה קדישתה ובזאת
השנה שנת א נ ז ק לממלכת עמי נדס אתרמי בממלל שקר כדוב הוה לו מנה לחץ וצרר
ונפש לו יהוה מהר ונדר יעמר כנשת כפר קליל ועמרה כמה נדר ואקים בה כהן יקום בצלות
– “May the benefactor, the one (who) acquires a good memory in every place, brings living
water (i.e. the Torah) into the house of prayer, fears YHWH, dwelled at Mount Si-
nai, stood upon it in prayers and praises and returned safely to Mount Gerizim, be
eternally remembered for good. May YHWH bless him and give him power for the
merit of the good memory of this man, the shining star, the illuminating sun, the
perfect moon, the good root, the choicest of roots, the genealogy of his father be-
ing from the Īqāra family, the genealogy of his mother from the daughters of
Qāla, the leader of the community of the Guardians (i.e. the Samaritans), the sup-
port of the congregation of the Hebrews, the discerning of the discerning, the giv-
er of gifts, the perfect lord, the righteous, the rhetor Ab'rām, son of the support,
the leader Ab Nibbūša bar Yišmā'el, for the completion of this Holy Torah. In this
year, the year 751 of the reign of the nation of impurity, he was deceived by a
mendacious word of falsehood, through which he got into oppression and distress.
But YHWH relieved him quickly and he made a vow to repair the synagogue of
Kufar Qallil and repaired it as he had vowed. In it, he established a priest to stand
in prayer every day and night and gave him what he can exist on forever. May
YHWH bless him and keep him and may He keep his son. Amen. Amen.”⁵⁷

Some of the honorific titles used here are rather reminiscent of praises to Moses and Aaron in various Samaritan texts than to ordinary mortals.⁵⁸ Others refer very specifically to individual experiences in the client's life and to merits he has acquired. Even the dating of the manuscript is linked to events that are not directly related to its production. Compared to all the other main tashqils studied so far, this one stands out for its strikingly individual appearance and the spontaneity of its wording. Almost none of the known text modules can be found here.

This exceptional case confirms the rule that arises from a comparison of the remaining instances: By and large, the texts are composed of the same recurring text modules; over time, these were enhanced and supplemented, often leading to the emergence of new stereotypical formulae that also found their way into other textual genres, e.g. deeds of sale or colophons. Thus, in terms of a literary history

⁵⁷ MS Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, Or. 6, Deut. 7:6–27:6. 751 AH corresponds to 1350/51 AD.

⁵⁸ Moses and Aaron are compared to sun and moon, e.g. in the midrash *Tibat Marqe*, ed. Tal, I, 27; the superlative דמע is applied to Moses in phrases like דמע כל הבשר – “the choicest of all flesh” – (e.g. Cowley, *The Samaritan Liturgy*, vol. 1, pp. 125, 134, 164, 199 and more), דמע כל האנשים – “the choicest of all men” – (e.g. *ibid.*, pp. 191, 203) or דמע הבוראות – “the choicest of creatures” (e.g. *ibid.*, p. 152). The phrase דמע האקרים – “the choicest of roots” – plays with the visual similarity of אקר – “root” – and the name איקרה – Īqāra, meaning “honour, wealth.”

of main tashqils, a general trend towards expansion is apparent. Even different main tashqils of the same scribe show slight extensions the more experience he has.⁵⁹ In terms of syntax, while the earlier texts exhibit a greater variety, the sentence structure becomes more fixed in later texts, although even then there was room, albeit limited, for variation.

THE LANGUAGE OF THE TASHQILS

The earliest extant manuscripts holding tashqils date from a time of linguistic transition.⁶⁰ Aramaic had been the vernacular of the Samaritan community for several centuries before it was gradually replaced by Arabic, a process that came to an end probably by the 11th century or even later.⁶¹ In texts written primarily, though not exclusively, for sacred purposes, for which Arabic was apparently no adequate alternative, this led to a renewal of Hebrew based on the language of the Pentateuch.⁶² In a second step, the limited vocabulary that could be drawn from the Torah was supplemented by loans from Aramaic and at times even from Arabic, leading to the emergence of a mixed language, “Neo-Samaritan Hebrew,”⁶³ attested since the early 14th century. This linguistic development can also partly be traced in the tashqils. Twelve out of fifteen main tashqils going back to seven scribes of a period between 457/1064 and 622/1225 can be considered as Aramaic proper; the remaining three show traces of both Aramaic and Hebrew. The only main tashqil written in “pure Hebrew” is dated 629/1232.⁶⁴ A gap of almost a hundred years separates it from the next attested main tashqil written in 729/1328. From this date on until the end of the 15th century, all 34 main tashqils are written in Neo-Samaritan Hebrew. Most of the recurring text modules are available in both language versions and are used alternatively.⁶⁵ The share of the languages varies; a

⁵⁹ The scribe’s tashqil of the 25th manuscript written by Abī Bārākāta in 606/1209 contains 157 letters, whereas that of his 50th copy of 622/1225 comprises 194 letters. More than 250 years later, ‘Afif ban Šidqa comes up with 253 letters in the tashqil of his 19th manuscript written in 881/1476 and with 444 letters in his 33rd copy of 890/1485.

⁶⁰ The oldest surviving scribe’s tashqil, contained in MS Nablus, Synagogue 21, fol. 277r–280v, Deut. 1:1–2:20, is dated 457/1064. Eight main tashqils are attested for the 12th century.

⁶¹ For the shift from Aramaic to Arabic only an approximation is possible; see Shehadeh, “When Did Arabic Replace Samaritan Aramaic?”; cf. Florentin, *Late Samaritan Hebrew*, pp. 23–32.

⁶² Florentin calls this linguistic stage “pure Hebrew;” see Florentin, *Late Samaritan Hebrew*, pp. 33–39.

⁶³ Also called “Shomronit,” “Hybrid Samaritan Hebrew” or “Late Samaritan Hebrew;” see *ibid.*, pp. 91–94.

⁶⁴ MS New York, Public Library, Heb. 228, pp. 462–477, Deut. 1:1–4:42.

⁶⁵ ... אני ... כתבתי זאת in (4) and (5) corresponds verbatim to ... כתבת הדה אורהותה קדישתה ... in (6), (7) and (8). ... ואשול לה ימלינה מלף לגבה בנים ובני בנים in (5) is partly paral-

mix of both within one phrase is not uncommon.⁶⁶ Some, however, seem to be fixed in Aramaic – honorific titles occur almost exclusively in the Aramaic determined form with a final *He*; the information on the number of manuscripts already written gives an Aramaic plural like ארון, ארואן or אוראון, even if in the formula at the beginning of the text התורה הקדושה appears in Hebrew as does the following verb כתבתי; see e.g. (7) and (8). Some rare exceptions confirm the rule.

The phenomenon is even more pronounced in the minor tashqils. Once a tashqil was established, a change of language was unlikely. Only in cases in which the customary form of a tashqil has been abandoned, we find an Aramaic version of the otherwise Hebrew tashqil “Middle of the Torah.”⁶⁷ The tashqil in Lev. 27 may have had a Hebrew origin, attested in one early fragmentary record;⁶⁸ all later evidence, however, is Aramaic. The Shabbat tashqil has a Hebrew wording, the Victory tashqil is found in Aramaic only. Thus, Hebrew and Aramaic tashqils stand side by side in one manuscript regardless of the time of its creation.

In bi- and triglots, part of the tashqils – mainly the scribes’ tashqils – are translated into Arabic or Aramaic and embedded into the text of the respective column,⁶⁹ running parallel to the tashqil in the Hebrew column, which makes evident that a translation caused no problem. Nevertheless, there seems to have been no need nor wish to translate and harmonise the languages of minor tashqils handed down by tradition.

CONCLUSION

With the invention of tashqils, Samaritan manuscript tradition has developed a unique tool which allows the scribe to customise every single copy and inscribe himself into the text of the Torah without actually affecting the text itself. However, the individualisation of the manuscripts was not primarily to be achieved through an individual language characterised by distinctive creativity. Nor was any priority given to providing information about the historical context of the origin of

leled by יהוה ישימה מברכה עליו וילמד לגבה בנים ובני בנים (Instead of Aramaic לגבה also Hebrew בה can be found in tashqils by ‘Afif and others.) (7) למפוק בני ישראל ממצרים alternates with לצאת העבד העני אל רצון יהוה with עבדה מסכינה צריכה אל רתות יהוה; בני ישראל ממצרים.

⁶⁶ See above, note 43.

⁶⁷ Three manuscripts written by Ab'rām b. Yāqob b. Ṭabya in the first half of the 14th century show an external form to mark the middle of the Torah instead of a tashqil. פלגה דארהותה, the Aramaic version of the formula, is written in letters made up of small dots into the empty line between two text sections. The choice of Aramaic may have the same reasoning as the special shape of the letters – both prevent the reader from wrongly reading the paratext as part of the Hebrew main text.

⁶⁸ MS Saint Petersburg, NLR, Sam. IIA 46, fol. 31v, Lev. 27:5–9 (dated 590/1194) reads זה [] ספר, whereas six later specimens read אהן ספר תורואתה (with minor variations).

⁶⁹ For the specific issue of tashqils in bi- and triglots, see Schorch, “The Allographic Use,” pp. 7–16.

the manuscript that would exceed the scope of a few standardised details. The few examples of major tashqils presented here may suffice to illustrate that the reservoir of respective text modules grew over time, but in fact remained at a relatively limited level. Moreover, most of the phrases used here can also be found in numerous Samaritan deeds of sale and in the rather rare colophons; they are part of a cross-genre pool of reusable text modules. As for minor tashqils, once set phrases would normally not be altered, but the way for the spontaneous creation of entirely new ones was open and utilised by single scribes. To express their individual scribal artistry, the scribes thus mainly used the opportunity by making particularly extensive use of the given reservoir of phrases and of skilfully placing minor tashqils throughout the manuscript. The added value of scribes' tashqils compared to usual colophons was apparently mainly the possibility to intertwine the names of scribe and client with the sacred text itself and in doing so, making themselves subsequently an inseparable part of it. To this aim, the scribes went to the effort of producing a scribe's tashqil, the content of which they could also have placed in a short note at the end of the manuscript – an evident strategy to personally partake of the sacred and timeless aura of the Pentateuch text.

ABBREVIATIONS

BnF – Bibliothèque nationale de France
 CBL – Chester Beatty Library
 JRL – John Rylands Library
 KUB – Kantons- und Universitätsbibliothek
 NLI – National Library of Israel
 NLR – National Library of Russia
 UL – University Library

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OPENING FORMULAS BY SCRIBES IN TALMUDIC LITERATURE

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INTRODUCTION

In ancient manuscripts, the colophon often contains the personal imprint of the scribe, occasionally including features such as the scribe's name, the date on which the manuscript was completed, and other information that is not intrinsic to the text in the manuscript. The colophon is the scribe's unique signature, and often mirrors personal scribal traditions. Appropriately, one book about colophons in early English manuscripts was titled "The Scribe Speaks?" (Gameson 2002).

The colophon is generally found at the end of a work. However, Hebrew and Aramaic Jewish manuscripts often include personal affirmations at the beginning of the work as well. As Beit-Arié (2021) noted: "Just as scribes concluded their work with phrases of praise to God, self-encouragement, and well-wishing, they would inscribe opening formulas in the same spirit at the outset of their labour, as they began the copying."

It is noteworthy that in Beit-Arié's monumental 500-page work regarding Hebrew codicology, the discussion of opening formulas comprises only a single page (with no bibliography), while some 60 pages are dedicated to the colophon and scribal formulas (pp. 91–149). Similarly, in Riegler's doctoral thesis concerning colophons in Hebrew manuscripts (1995), only three pages are dedicated to the discussion of opening formulas, and in his paper about colophons (1996), he devotes only one footnote to these formulas (p. 135, n. 10). This paper aims to expound on the neglected phenomenon of opening formulas, focusing on some of the major works of Talmudic literature.

The opening formula may include an identification of the text, a title or inscription provided by the copyist, and occasionally, a personal statement. In some instances, the scribe offers words of prayer before starting the copying process, or calls to God for help and adds a declaration of faith. These affirmations include phrases such as "in the name of God," "in the name of the living God," "on Your behalf," "in the name of the Lord, we will succeed," etc.

The research of these opening formulas is significant for several reasons: the formulas make it possible to identify the connection between various manuscripts; they indicate the cultural and geographical space of the author or authors; they elucidate the scribe's connection to the object of his work; and they recognize other fields of his interest.

For the purpose of this paper, we examined the opening formulas of all available manuscripts of Talmudic literature: the Mishna, the Halakhic Midrashim, the Tosefta, the Jerusalem Talmud, and the Babylonian Talmud.¹ The examined corpus also includes all known fragments from the Cairo Genizah and from the European Genizah (binding fragments).² The full database is available online,³ and a selected collection of them is included in the accompanied reader. In this paper we refer to the entries in *Literary Snippets: A Colophon Reader*, with the # sign along with their number.

A note about dating the manuscripts: most manuscripts are not explicitly dated, and their date can only be estimated based on paleographic and codicological information, which may not be accurate, or may include a wide margin of error. Dates of manuscripts that appear in this paper intend to provide a general timeframe but may be inaccurate, apart from cases in which manuscripts were dated explicitly in the colophon or based on other evidence.⁴

MANUSCRIPTS WITH NO OPENING FORMULA

There is only a small number of Talmudic manuscripts with no opening formula of any kind. Out of the 96 Babylonian manuscripts examined in this study, thirteen have no opening formula (barring the caveat below). Ten of these manuscripts are Ashkenazi, two are Sephardic, and one is Oriental. Similar statistics emerge in the case of the Jerusalem Talmud and the Tosefta, where manuscripts with no opening formula are the minority.

One example is Ms. Hamburg, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. hebr. 19, written in Girona, 1184. This manuscript has a rich colophon, but includes no opening formula.

¹ Manuscripts of Amoraitic (Aggadic) Midrashim and other compositions from the late Amoraic period were not included in the corpus.

² The material was collected through several catalogs and online databases, including: Sussman's *Thesaurus of Talmudic Manuscripts* (2012, with fjms.org additions and corrections, 2017), Kahana's *Manuscripts of the Halakhic Midrashim* (1995), Sussman's *Seride HaYerushalmi* (2021), FJMS Bavli Variants website and Genizah website, Friedman's *Torat HaTannaim* database of Tosefta and Halakhic Midrashim, and Yad Harav Herzog's database of Mishna and Talmud textual witnesses.

³ <https://bit.ly/3CHJzTb>.

⁴ We thank Mordechai Weintraub for helping us with the dating of many of the manuscripts.



Figure 1: Hamburg, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. hebr. 19 (165), fol. 446

The colophon reads:

I, Yiṣḥaq the scribe, the son of Ḥaninay, *may he rest in peace* [abbrev.], wrote these three Bavē [= Bava Qama, Bava Meṣiaʿ, Bava Batra] for myself in the city of Girona, and I completed them in the month of Elul, on the year four thousand nine hundreds and forty-four to Creation, May the Merciful One grant me the privilege of reciting them, me and my offspring and my offspring's offspring forever more, to study and to teach, to observe and to keep all the teachings of the Torah, Amen and may it be so.

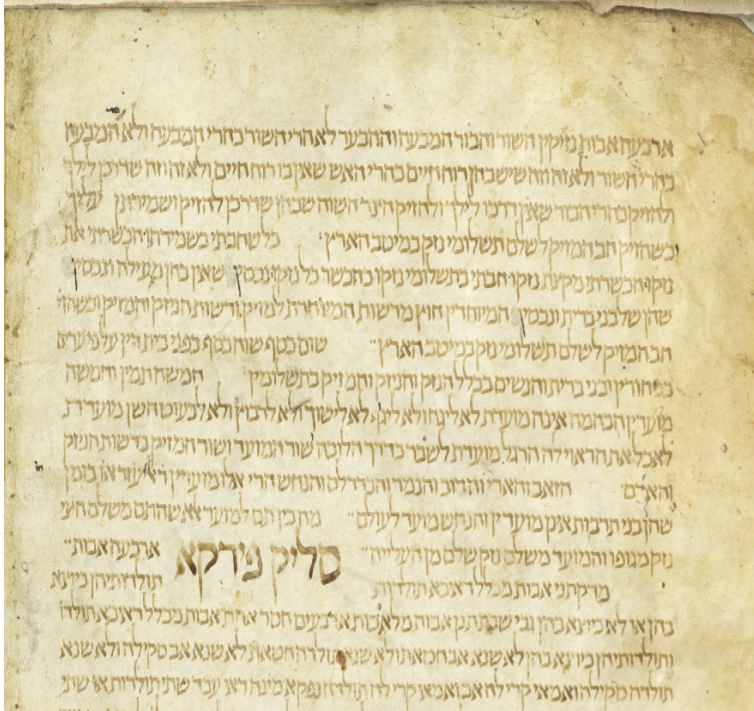


Figure 2: Hamburg, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. hebr. 19 (165), fol.1

The author clearly inscribed the closing colophon in large letters, and surrounded it with a frame, investing significant effort into the design of the colophon. However, there is no opening formula at the beginning of the book. Even a visual emphasis using size, color, or decoration, is absent in the opening formula.

In some cases there appears to be no opening formula, when in fact there had previously been, but the top of the manuscript was cut off. For example, in #46 (Ms. Munich, Bavarian State Library, cod. hebr. 95 of the Babylonian Talmud), traces of introductory words are clearly visible above the opening of tractate Shabbat, which is the beginning of the Talmud in this manuscript; the words seem to read עזרי גדא... בטוב גדא "With Good Luck... 'My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth' [Ps. 121:2]". On the top left corner, the words בשעת ברכה ("In time of blessing") are clearly visible. These words were not included in the FJMS Bavli variants website, although in other manuscripts the opening words and colophons were usually transcribed.

MANUSCRIPTS WITH ADDED TITLES

One common phenomenon is an opening which only includes the title provided by the scribe. In the Babylonian Talmud, approximately half of the manuscripts in-

clude a title, such as “Order Neziqin Bava Qama” (#3, Ms. Vatican, Apostolic Library, heb. 116) or “Tractate Kippurim” (#1, T-S F 1(1).43).⁵ A similar phenomenon emerges in the case of the Mishna, although we did not include such manuscripts of the Mishna in our detailed database.

An interesting case is #2 (Genizah fragment T-S K6.197), which includes the inscription *מסכת עירובין תלמודא דמתיבאתא דרבנן בבלאי פירקא קמא* (“Tractate Eruvin, The Talmud of the Academies of Our Babylonian Rabbis, First Chapter”). The characterization of the text as Babylonian is unusual, and may point to the cultural location in which this eleventh century Oriental manuscript was copied – an area in which the Jerusalem Talmud was studied as well; this explains why the Talmud is referenced in relation to its Palestinian counterpart.



Figure 3: T-S K6.197: “Tractate Eruvin, The Talmud of the Academies of Our Babylonian Rabbis, First Chapter”

FIVE BASIC ELEMENTS IN OPENINGS

Apart from opening formulas that include only a title, there are five basic elements used by scribes in their opening formulas:

1. “I/We shall begin”
2. Rhymed openings
3. Calling in God’s name
4. Imploring God’s help
5. Well-wishing (for good luck)

Each of these elements can be further divided into sub-elements, as discussed below. The opening formulas of most manuscripts include one of these elements, but it is not uncommon for an opening to combine several elements.

⁵ Genizah fragments from the Taylor-Schechter (T-S) collection in Cambridge University Library (CUL) are marked without mentioning CUL in each reference.

“I/WE SHALL BEGIN”

The most minimal personal statement by a scribe is the phrase “אתחיל/נתחיל” (“I/we shall begin”) or “אתחיל לכתוב” (“I shall begin writing”) followed by the name of the tractate or composition. This phrase alone inserts the scribe into the text. The phenomenon may not be the earliest form of scribal openings, but logically it is placed immediately following the title.

This opening formula is found in approximately 40% of the personalized openings: in 18 of 45 manuscripts of the Mishna, 17 of 44 of the Babylonian Talmud, and in 3 of 7 of Halakhic Midrashim. The numbers are smaller in compositions with fewer manuscripts that contain personal openings: 1 of 5 in the Jerusalem Talmud, and neither of the 2 Tosefta manuscripts.

Not all the openings that contain the phrase “I/we shall begin” are minimal. Of the 45 manuscripts that open with this formula, 14 contain the formula alone, while the others include one or more of the other elements listed above.

RHYMING OPENING FORMULAS

25 out of the 103 manuscripts with personal openings include a rhyming opening formula. The rhyme is generally an elaboration on the phrase “I/we shall begin.”

For example:⁶

- #10, Oriental Genizah fragment of Mishna Avot, T-S E3.42: אתחיל מסכת אבות בעזרת שוכן ערבות (“I shall begin tractate Avot, in the name of the One who resides in ‘ārābōt”).
- #11, Sephardic manuscript JTS 1608 of Babylonian Talmud tractate Rosh Hashana: אתחיל מסכת ראש השנה בעזרת שוכן מעונה (“I shall begin tractate Rosh Hashana with the help of the resident of Mə‘ōnāh”).
- #16, eleventh century Oriental Genizah fragment Oxford Heb. d. 21/1–2: בשם מעלה ארוכה אחל לכתוב מסכת סוכה (“In the name of the One who heals [*ma‘ale arukha*] I shall begin writing tractate Sukka”).

The rhyming may be combined with some of the other elements mentioned above, such as the curious case of the famous eleventh century Italian Ms. Kaufman A50 manuscript of the Mishna (#14). This manuscript generally lacks opening formulas, but for the order Neziqin the scribe decided to write a rhymed opening, also calling in God’s name: בשם א' מביט עמקים נתחיל סדר נזיקים (“In the name of the God who looks into depths [*amaqim*] We shall begin order Neziqim”).

Sometimes the opening does not include the element “I/we shall begin,” but does include other elements, for example, #19: אל שוכן מעונים סייעני לכתוב תורת כהנים (“God, who resides in his dwellings [*me'onim*] help me write Torat Kohanim”);

⁶ In these examples we made transliterations of the rhyming words when necessary.

twelfth century⁷ Italian Parma Di Rossi 139 manuscript of Midrash Torat Kohanim (Sifra).

Rhymed openings are already found in #8, Oriental manuscript of Mishna Shabbat, with Babylonian vocalization, dated c. ninth/tenth century CE,⁸ in Antonin III B 328: בשמך היודע ועד נתחזקתי לכתוב סידרא תנינא מועד (“In your name, the One who knows and witnesses [*ha-yodea' wa'ed*], I was strengthened to begin writing the second order – Moed”).

In two cases it is unclear that the rhyme was intentional: in #12, ninth/tenth century⁹ Genizah fragment (palimpsest) of Jerusalem Talmud Moed Qatan: מסכתה משקים בשם אב הרחמים (“Tractate Mashqim, in the name of the Father of mercy [*av ha-rahamim*]”), and #13, the Yemenite Columbia X893 T14, T141 manuscript of the same tractate in the Babylonian Talmud, from 1546: בשמך רחמנא דעלך רחצנא: מסכת משקין גמר [*rahamana*], which in You we trust [*rahasna*], tractate Mashqin Gemar”).

Rhymed openings are found in manuscripts from all areas – Oriental, Sephardic, Yemenite, Ashkenazic, Italian and Byzantine; from all periods; and in manuscripts of all Talmudic genres, other than the Tosefta, which includes only two manuscripts with personal opening formulas.

CALLING IN GOD'S NAME

The most common type of opening includes the element of calling in God's name. Out of 103 manuscripts with personal openings, 62 include this element: 28 of the Mishna, 26 of the Babylonian Talmud, 4 of the Jerusalem Talmud, 2 of the Tosefta, and 2 Halakhic Midrashim.

There are five sub-categories for this type of opening:

1. אתחיל/נתחיל (“I/we shall begin”) rhymed openings, with calling in God's name
2. בשמך רחמנא (“In Your Name, O Merciful One”)
3. בשם יי (“In the name of the Lord”)
4. בשם יי אל עולם (“In the name of the Lord, God of the world”)
5. בשם יי נעשה ונצליח (“In the name of the Lord we shall do and succeed”)

The first sub-category has been addressed in the previous section with examples. The four additional sub-categories will be discussed below.

Two manuscripts include a formula that is not categorized by either of these criteria: #43, Oriental Genizah fragment T-S F2(2).77 of Babylonian Talmud tractate Megilla: בשם חי וקיים (“in the name of the One who is living and steadfast”); and #44, Oriental twelfth century Genizah fragment T-S Misc. 28.237 of Babylo-

⁷ See note on the dating in *Literary Snippets: A Colophon Reader*.

⁸ Murtonen (1956). NLI catalog dates the manuscript to 1000 CE.

⁹ Olszowy-Schlanger and Shweka (2013).

an Talmud tractate Nidda: בשם אל עליון (“in the name of God Most High”), although these words appear on the top margin of one of the pages, and not as an opening to the entire manuscript.



Figure 4: T-S Misc. 28.237: “in the name of God Most High”

“IN YOUR NAME, O MERCIFUL ONE” – AN ANCIENT ORIENTAL OPENING

Out of 62 manuscripts with openings that call in God’s name, 23 include the formula בשמך רחמנא (“In Your Name, O Merciful One”) – sometimes abbreviated such as 'בשמ' רח'.

Some of the openings containing בשמך רחמנא also include other elements, such as “we shall begin.” For example, #24, Genizah fragment T-S F1(2).99: 'בשמך] רחמ' [בשמך] רחמנא, ונחיל מסכת מגילה

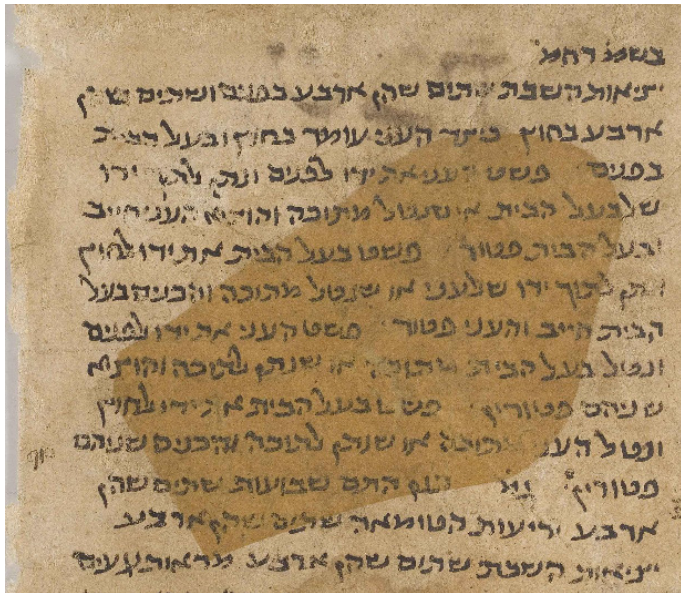


Figure 5: New York, JTS ENA 606/1: “In Your Name, O Merciful One”

Most cases of this opening are found in Oriental manuscripts – 18 of the 23. Non-Oriental manuscripts (Byzantine [2], Yemenite [2], and Italian [1]) include expanded versions, as discussed below.

The opening formula בשמך רחמנא is quite common in Oriental manuscripts – not only in books, but also in letters. For example, of the 100 documents from the

Genizah transcribed in Frenkel 2006 (from the eleventh to thirteenth century), 37 include no indication of the opening formula due to the fragmentary status of the text; 25 include no opening formula at all; and 31 include the opening *בשמך רחמנא*.¹⁰ Almladh (2010) found this formula, or its abbreviated version *בשמך*, in 54 out of a corpus of 935 Judeo-Arabic letters (the corpus is mostly from the latter half of the ninth century and from the eleventh century), and 50 letters open with *על שמך רחמנא*, or *על שמך*, with the same meaning.¹¹

The origin of the inscription, and its relationship to the Arabic Basmalah, are discussed below.

“IN YOUR NAME, O MERCIFUL ONE” – EXPANDED VERSIONS

Expanded versions of *בשמך רחמנא* are found in some later manuscripts, and not only in Oriental ones.

One expanded version is found in Byzantine and Italian manuscripts: the opening *בשמך רחמנא וחוננא* (“In Your Name, O Merciful and Compassionate One”) appears in #26, the Italian Leiden manuscript of the Jerusalem Talmud (from 1389). Another variation is found in #28, Ms. Paris Heb. 671, a fifteenth-century Byzantine manuscript of tractate Berakhot, which includes the formula *בשמך רחמנא אלהא חוננא* (“In Your Name, O Merciful One, Compassionate God”) in a far more expanded opening.¹²

An even more expanded version of this formula is found in #27, an eleventh century Byzantine manuscript from the Cairo Genizah (Oxford Heb. d. 54/17–24), where the scribe precedes the second chapter (!) with the inscription: *בשמך רחמנא וחוננא וקדישא ליה מלכותא* (“In your name, O Merciful, Compassionate and Holy One, who is the Ruler”). The appearance of the longer version in this early period suggests that the short version *בשמך רחמנא וחוננא* is quite ancient.¹³ The phrase is indeed found in other works, which exceed the scope of this paper.

Another version is found in late Yemenite manuscripts. Two sixteenth-century Yemenite manuscripts of the Babylonian Talmud contain the inscription *בשמך רחמנא ועלך רחצנא* (“In Your Name, O Merciful One, and we trust in You”).

In conclusion, the phrase *בשמך רחמנא* is Oriental in origin, whereas Italian-Byzantine texts contain the version *בשמך רחמנא וחוננא*, and Yemenite manuscripts include the version *בשמך רחמנא ועלך רחצנא*.

¹⁰ Five include the Arabic words *עונך יא רב* (“Your Help, O Lord”), usually on the second page of the letter.

¹¹ 194 of the letters include some form of introductory formula.

¹² This manuscript also contains the formulas *ע'מ'י ע'ש'ו* and *א'י'ה'ן א'י'ה'ן*; see below.

¹³ Assuming the shorter version is earlier. This assumption can be disputed, but it seems plausible.

**“IN THE NAME OF THE LORD, GOD OF THE WORLD” – MAIMONIDES’ FORMULA
AND ITS ROOTS**

Maimonides famously opened many of his books with the formula בשם יי אל עולם (“In the name of the Lord, God of the world”),¹⁴ and this opening is used regularly by his disciples and descendants.¹⁵

This opening appears in 13 Mishna manuscripts and 5 manuscripts of the Babylonian Talmud – primarily Oriental in origin. Most of the Mishna manuscripts include Maimonides’ commentary, and only two are clearly independent Mishna manuscripts.¹⁶ One of the manuscripts of the Talmud with this opening is a late Yemenite one, which was probably influenced by Maimonides, as are many Yemenite Jewish texts.

This leaves us with six Oriental manuscripts, 2 of the Mishna and 4 of the Babylonian Talmud, with no known Maimonidean influence. It is reasonable to assume that at least some of these were also written by scribes from the Maimonidean school, especially those dated to the thirteenth century onwards.

However, this opening is also found in some non-Talmudic manuscripts that precede Maimonides, hence it would be incorrect to assume that all Talmudic manuscripts with this opening belong without question to the Maimonidean school. The most definitive evidence of pre-Maimonidean use of this opening is the Genizah fragment T-S 32.4, by eleventh century ‘Eli ben ‘Amram’s hand, which includes a poem in honor of the Karaite Menashe ben al-Qazzaz and his son ‘Adaya, amended by ‘Eli ben ‘Amram himself (c. 1064) to honor Abu al-Surur Perahya *rosh ha-pereq*.¹⁷ The poem is headed by the inscription בשם יי אל עולם.¹⁸

¹⁴ The phrase is a citation of Gen. 21:33. Maimonides interpreted the word עולם denoting “world,” and we followed his interpretation, since his use of the phrase is paramount. See *The Guide of the Perplexed* II 13, II 30, III 29. The latter reads: בשם יי אל עולם דעוה תג'מע וג'וד. Pines’ translation is as follows (*Guide of the Perplexed*, S. Pines edition, Volume 2, p. 516): “[B]oth the existence of the deity and the creation of the world in time by that deity being comprised in that call.” The original meaning is most certainly “everlasting God” (see: *HALOT Online*, s.v. “עוֹלָם,” accessed on 19/04/2022: <https://dictionaries.brillonline.com/search#dictionary=halothebrew&id=AYIN.159>. First published online: February 2017).

¹⁵ See S. Lieberman, *Hilkhot HaYerushalmi*, p. ה, n. 7. Lieberman’s note that the phrase is also found in the opening of the *Letter of Consolation* written by Maimonides’ father should not make the reader think that Maimun himself used it, for it is clear that it is only the copyist heading, before an inscription describing the letter. See Simmons, p. 368.

¹⁶ There are also partial fragments, which may or may not include Maimonides’ commentary.

¹⁷ See Bareket, p. 13.

¹⁸ See J. Mann, *The Jews in Egypt and in Palestine*, vol. 2, 11–13, and the literature cited by Bareket, n. 23.

Another document that includes the phrase is Paris, Mosseri Ms. VIII, 44.1A, which contains a list of *Piyyutim* on one side, and on the other side a Baraita from Kalla Rabbati 3:21 = Derekh Erez Zuta 1:16, with the opening בשם יי אל עולם. The text is not dated, but from a paleographic viewpoint it is estimated to be an eleventh century manuscript.

Two variations on the formula, which appear in two different Genizah fragments, are noteworthy in this context: One includes the formula בשם אלהי עולם (“In the name of the God of the world/the Everlasting God”) – tenth century Oriental (or North-African) manuscript T-S E2.104 of Mishna Bava Qama (#34); and the other is inscribed בשם אל עולם (with a similar meaning), in the eleventh century Oriental ENA 2078/4 of Babylonian Talmud tractate Megilla (#35). בשם אל עולם is a common opening in Karaite ketubbot (marriage contracts),¹⁹ and other letters and documents.²⁰

These formulas may be precursors to the phrase used by Maimonides, בשם יי אל עולם, and in turn, Maimonides’ common use of the phrase may have influenced scribal openings in the Orient and in Yemen.

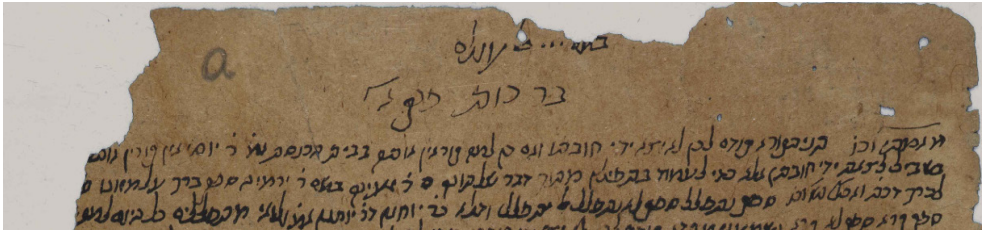


Figure 6: Maimonides, Hilkhot HaYerushalmi, autograph, T-S F17.7

CALLING IN GOD’S NAME WITH WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

Calling in the name of God is sometimes accompanied by other words of encouragement, such as the phrase בשם יי נעשה ונצליח (“in the name of God we shall do and succeed”), or the acronym ב'י'נ'ו. This inscription is found twice in manuscripts of the Babylonian Talmud, and is also the opening formula of Ashkenazic twelfth century Ms. Erfurt of the Tosefta (#40), and of the copy by R. Yosef Rosh HaSeder (twelfth/thirteenth century) of Jerusalem Talmud tractate Berakhot (#41, T-S F17.50).

¹⁹ See Oxford Bodl. Ms. Heb. d 66/49–50: בשם אל עולם הצליחו, בנהי מקרא, לבני מצר, לדה נסכה כתבה מצר, J. Mann, *Texts and Studies in Jewish History and Literature*, II, Philadelphia 1935, p. 171. See also T-S Misc.35.10. Gil, *Palestine During the First Muslim Period*, II, Doc. #303.

²⁰ See for example T-S Ar.43.200, בשם אל עולם שמוש תהלים, T-S Ar.30.46 + T-S Ar.30.89 (inventory of a dyer’s store), T-S 13J6.30 (Letter from Yosef to Abū l-Fakhr) בשם אל עולם, JTS ENA NS 22.24 (circular on behalf of a notable from ‘Arqa, Northern Syria, whose wife and child were held in captivity), Oxford Bodl. Ms. Heb. c 28/9 (letter from a Karaite to his community).

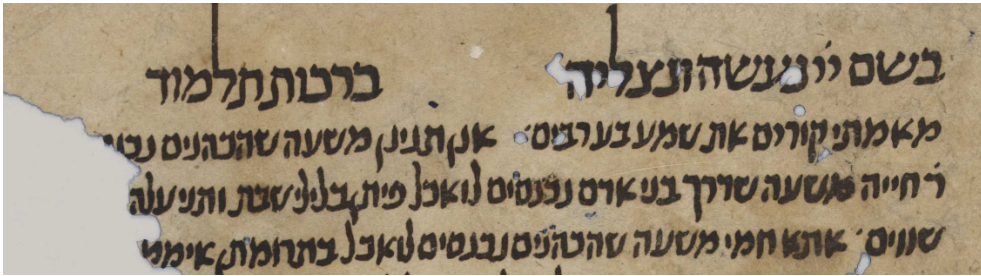


Figure 7: T-S F17.50: Jerusalem Talmud tractate Berakhot, “in the name of God we shall do and succeed”

IMPLORING GOD’S HELP AND WISHING FOR SUCCESS

One common inscription implores God’s help with the acronym ע'מ'י ע'ש'ו – an abbreviation of the verse עזרי מעם יי עושה שמים וארץ (Ps. 121:2: “My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth”). This phrase is common in manuscripts from different origins, both European and Oriental (from the Cairo Genizah). According to Beit-Arié (2021), this phrase is the most common in the corpus he examined; it appears in approximately half of the manuscripts that contain opening formulas, from nearly all locations, although it is more common in Italy and less so in the Orient (and never in Yemen). Regarding Judeo-Arabic letters, Almladh (2010, p. 53) found two letters from Iraq that opened with this verse.

Other inscriptions implore God using the acronym א'י'ה'ן א'י'ה'ן – א'נא יי הושיעה נא – א'נא יי הצליחה נא (Ps. 118:25: “Save now, I beseech thee, O Lord: O Lord, I beseech thee, send now prosperity”), and use phrases such as בסיעתא or בעזרה (“with the help of-[God]”).

The phrase בטב ג'דא (“with good luck”) also appears as an inscription, found in two thirteenth-century manuscripts: #52 (Vatican, Apostolic Library, heb. 115) and #53 (Vatican, Apostolic Library, heb. 120–121). In the latter, the formula precedes some of the tractates, and had likely appeared before other tractates as well, but was cut off in later generations, since the inscription was written very high on the page. As noted above, this formula is probably found at the beginning of the Talmud in the Munich heb. 95 codex.

OPENING FORMULAS IN A KETUBBA

The origin of using opening formulas in a ketubba (marriage contract) is a phenomenon that should be viewed in the broader context of written documents that have similar opening phrases.

Felicitations and requests that open or decorate ketubbot found in the Cairo Genizah, according to the practice in the Land of Israel (Friedman 1980), included the inscriptions: על שמה דברייך (“In the name of our Creator”), על שמך ברין (“In Your name, our Creator”), בשמה דברייך נעשה ונצליה (“By the name of our Creator, may we do and succeed”), בשם יי נעשה ונצליה (“By the name of the Lord may we do and suc-

ceed”), and בשמיה דרחמנא יתברך שמיה לעד (“In the name of the Merciful One; may His name be blessed forever”).



Figure 8: T-S 12.154: Ketubba with the inscription “in the name of God we shall do and succeed”



Figure 9: T-S 16.123: Ketubbah with the inscription “By the name of our Creator, may we do and succeed”

Many marriage documents repeatedly include the benedictory formulas נעשה ונצליח (“we shall do and succeed”) and ויבנו ויצליחו (“may they build and succeed”). These phrases are highly appropriate for marriage documents according to the practice in the Land of Israel; there, one of the Seven Blessings recited during the Jewish wedding ceremony concluded with the phrase מצליח אתן וכלה (“He who provides prosperity to the groom and bride”).

As mentioned earlier, in Karaite ketubbot we find the phrase בשם אל עולם (“in the name of the God of the world / the eternal God”).

In later marriage documents we also find the formula בטוב גדא (“with good luck”), which may be the precursor to this formula in other manuscripts.

THE BASMALAH

Ketubbot are not the only documents with openings that contain well-wishing and calling in God’s name. In the Islamic world, it was common practice to open documents, letters and books with the Basmalah, *بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ*, “In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.” In fact, Rabbi Simon ben Şemaḥ Duran (d. Spain, 1444) opposed this use in Jewish Ketubbot, on the grounds that it is an imitation of the non-Jewish Basmalah custom (see Friedman 1981 p. 93).

Some common opening formulas in the Jewish Oriental world are in fact very similar to the Basmalah, especially בשמך דרחמנא and על שמך דרחמנא (“In Your Name, O Merciful One”). Some Jewish texts include both the Basmalah and the phrase על שמך (“In Your Name”). See for example the dowry clause in T-S 13J7.8.

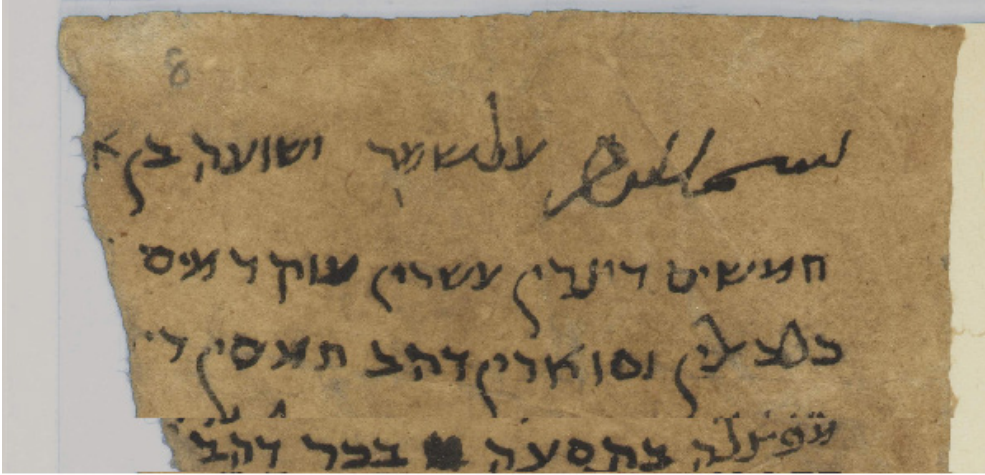


Figure 10: T-S 13J7.8: Dowry clause with an Arabic Basmalah

This instance clearly shows use of the phrases על שמך / בשמך as an equivalent to the Arabic Basmalah in Jewish documents. As Cohen (2007, p. 22) put it, “it is quite clear that medieval Jews regularly used the expression in cognizance of the Islamic usage.”

Nevertheless, contrary to the position of Rabbi Simon ben Ṣemaḥ Duran and others, prominent scholars argued that the Islamic opening formula in fact originated in the ancient Jewish phrase (Goitein 1953, p. 48 n. 26; Idem. 1981, p. 379 n. 32; Friedman 1981 p. 93. See also Almbldh 2007, p. 47). The fact that the Basmalah is not an Islamic innovation is attested by a pre-Islamic Arabic version of the Basmalah (Al-Jallad 2020, p. 123).

S. Lieberman (1935, 1958) pointed to the Jerusalem Talmud, tractate Shabbat, 6:[10], 8d (Hebrew Academy edition p. 400, lines 45–50), where the formula על שמה דברייך (“In the name of our Creator”) was used by an astrologer who had converted, before embarking on a journey. Lieberman speculated that the convert was mimicking pagan oaths, and the Rabbis altered this formula to a call in the name of God: “[I lean on] the name of our Creator.”

Based on Lieberman’s argument, we can say that in late antiquity it was common practice to call upon the name of a deity before embarking on a new mission. This practice was adopted in both Judaism and Islam (and also Christianity; Almbldh p. 58–59) and the phrasing was adapted to reflect their belief systems.

This practice was later reflected in writing as well, as a formula included in ketubbot and letters, and eventually also included by scribes in book manuscripts, as a sort of prayer that the marriage, or the matter which the letter is dealing with, or the writing of the manuscript, will be successful.

OPENINGS AS AN INTRODUCTION TO COPIED BOOKS – THE TESTIMONY IN SEFER ḤASIDIM

A testimony of the scribal custom to preface books by calling in God's name is found in *Sefer Ḥasidim*, a compilation attributed to Rabbi Yehuda the Ḥasid (died in Germany, 1217) and his school:²¹

“Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord” (Gen. 4:26), and this is immediately followed by “This is the book” (Gen. 5:1). When a scribe begins a book, he should pray to God [orally] that he will complete it successfully. A rabbi²² saw a scribe who wrote, at the beginning of a book, “in the name of the Lord” on the upper margin. The rabbi asked him, why did you do this? He answered: Because “the name of the Lord” immediately precedes “This is the book.” The rabbi told him: The verse says “to call upon the name of the Lord” and this is immediately followed by “this is the book,” for one should pray to God to help him complete the book – but he should not write inside the book “in the name of the Lord,” because it is prohibited to add anything to the book, as the Bible says, “thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it” (Deut. 13:1), and “add thou not unto His words” (Prov. 30:6). It is common practice to write “in the name of the Lord,” as if to state that the scribe will write for the sake of Heaven.²³

The text cites a homily justifying the practice of opening a book by calling in God's name, in order to oppose this practice. Spiegel (p. 391) argued that this text refers to scribes copying the Torah or the books of the Bible, since the argument is based on the verse “thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it,” which applies to scripture (the Written Torah), and not to postbiblical books (the Oral Torah). On the other hand, there is no evidence that such a practice existed in the case of Torah scrolls, which seems unlikely.

One plausible explanation is that the text reflects the common scribal custom to open books by calling in the name of God. The homily on the verses in Genesis was created as a justification for this practice, and apparently later, one (or more) scribes decided to implement this practice in the writing of a Torah scroll or biblical scripture. *Sefer Ḥasidim* objected to this practice, and insisted that calling in God's name should be an oral statement at the inception of the copying process, and not a written one.

The approach of *Sefer Ḥasidim* thus may advertently or inadvertently reflect the original oral nature of calling in God's name.

²¹ *Sefer Ḥasidim*, par. 703 (p. 182).

²² Or: “a wise man” (חכם).

²³ The last sentence seems to contradict the previous ruling. See Spiegel, p. 391.

TOWARDS A CONCLUSION

Based on the initial research presented here on opening formulas in Talmudic literature, we can cautiously draw a broad-strokes image of the origins and development of this practice.

Most scribes begin the process of copying a manuscript with a personal inscription or opening formula. The inscription may merely take the form of a title for the work; or it may include the personal statement “I shall begin” along with a title; and sometimes the scribe calls out in the name of God and asks for His help or wishes for good luck.

1. The origin of these inscriptions may be found in the practice of voicing words of encouragement and reassurance before embarking on a journey or a dangerous mission. The recitation of such words before leaving the port can be traced back to the fourth century at least, based on a story in the Jerusalem Talmud (Lieberman, 1935, 1958).
2. This ancient practice may have influenced the Jewish world, as well as the Basmalah, which was common in the Islamic world as an opening formula (Goitein, 1953, 1981), but a version of this phrase is also found in pre-Islamic Arabia (Al-Jallad, 2020).
3. The oral declaration is later reflected in the inscription which often appears at the top of a ketubba stating “May they build and prosper,” as well as in letters and other documents, where the phrase “in Your Name, the Merciful One” has been commonly used as an opening formula.
4. Scribes subsequently adopted this practice, and included a personal statement before embarking on the task of copying a book – sometimes calling in God’s name, and sometimes calling for His help or wishing for good luck.
5. Various opening formulas exist, and some are linked to specific locations (such as בשמך רחמנא (“In Your name, O Merciful One”) – which is usually Oriental, but is also sometimes found in more elaborate versions in Byzantine and Yemenite manuscripts). Others were more widespread, such as the use of the abbreviation ע'מ'י ע'ש'ו (“My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth”) imploring God’s help. Rhyming opening formulas are included in manuscripts from many locations and time periods.
6. The phrase בשם אל עולם (“in the name of the God of the world / the eternal God”) may have stemmed from בשמך רחמנא, and this might be the origin of the phrase בשם יי אל עולם (“In the name of the Lord, God of the world”), which was used primarily by Maimonides and scribes from his school.

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HEBREW PRINTING AND PRINTERS' COLOPHONS IN THE CAIRO GENIZAH: NETWORKING BOOK TRADE IN EUROPE AND THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

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The Cairo Genizah is famous as a source of manuscripts for the study of the medieval Mediterranean world, especially Jewish communities during the High Middle Ages. However, among the hundreds of thousands of Middle Eastern manuscript fragments in Genizah collections are more than 12,000 moveable-type printed items, most of which come from Europe. They are the remnants of a significant trade in Hebrew-script books that crossed the Mediterranean in the centuries following Gutenberg's printing press. This corpus is severely understudied, with few previous surveys of printed Genizah material and no systematic cataloguing data currently available to organise it. This article takes several steps to rectify this situation by examining 57 printers' colophons in Genizah collections. The resulting analysis allows a preliminary reconstruction of the European and Ottoman networks through which Cairene Jews obtained Hebrew books between 1500 and 1900. This paper also serves as an introduction to Hebrew printing for Cairo Genizah scholars and an introduction to the Cairo Genizah for specialists in Hebrew printing.

INTRODUCTION¹

The 'Cairo Genizah' is a repository of hundreds of thousands of manuscript fragments that Cairene Jews stored mainly in the Ben Ezra Synagogue of Old Cairo be-

¹ My thanks to Magdalen M. Connolly for her comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

tween the eleventh and nineteenth centuries. This community considered it profane to dispose of any text written in Hebrew, especially those inscribed with the name of God, like common rubbish. Instead, when a text was too old or damaged for continued use, they placed it in a ‘genizah’, a hidden space for storing sacred material until such a time as it could be properly disposed. European collectors and scholars acquired most of the fragments in Cairene *genizot* (pl. of genizah) in the late nineteenth century, with a majority ending up in the Cambridge University Library. Subsequent research has shown the Cairo Genizah to be an invaluable source for the study of manuscript culture and the medieval Middle East between 1000 and 1350.²

The post-medieval centuries are much less well understood in Genizah Studies, but Cairo’s Jews did continue to store their old papers in the Ben Ezra genizah chamber during the Ottoman period.³ Among these were thousands of pages printed in Europe with moveable Hebrew type. This article examines the material history of these printed items as evidence for the movement of books between Europe and the Ottoman Empire. Specifically, it surveys 57 printed colophons in Genizah collections, using their provenance information to determine from where Cairene Jews obtained Hebrew-script books between 1500 and 1900.⁴

PRINTED MATERIAL IN THE CAIRO GENIZAH

Solomon Schechter acquired most of the Cairo Genizah for the Cambridge University Library during a trip to Egypt in 1896–97. He was a scholar of Rabbinic Judaism, initially interested in lost fragments of *Ben Sira*, and he apparently found the

² For fuller accounts of the Cairo Genizah and its acquisition history, see Stefan C. Reif, *A Jewish Archive from Old Cairo: The History of Cambridge University’s Genizah Collection* (London; New York: Routledge, 2000); Adina Hoffman and Peter Cole, *Sacred Trash: The Lost and Found World of the Cairo Geniza* (New York: Nextbook, Schocken, 2011); and especially Rebecca J.W. Jefferson, ‘Deconstructing “the Cairo Genizah”: A Fresh Look at Genizah Manuscript Discoveries in Cairo before 1897’, *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 108, no. 4 (2018): 422–48.

³ The community also deposited manuscripts in buried genizot (plural of genizah) at Cairo’s Basatin Cemetery and several other sites around the city; see Haggai Ben-Shammai, ‘Is “The Cairo Genizah” a Proper Name or a Generic Noun? On the Relationship between the Genizot of the Ben Ezra and the Dār Simḥa Synagogues’, in *From a Sacred Source: Genizah Studies in Honour of Professor Stefan C. Reif* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2010), 43–52.

⁴ This study only considers material printed with European moveable type from the 15th century onwards. Middle Eastern Jews were already familiar with woodcut block-printing for several centuries before that, as also attested in the Cairo Genizah. See Karl Schaefer, ‘Eleven Medieval Arabic Block Prints in the Cambridge University Library’, *Arabica* 48, no. 2 (2001): 210–39, <https://doi.org/10.1163/157005801323224467>; Paul Fenton, ‘Une xylographie arabe médiévale à la Bibliothèque nationale et universitaire de Strasbourg’, *Arabica* 50, no. 1 (2003): 114–17, <https://doi.org/10.1163/157005803321112182>.

printed Genizah material in the Ben Ezra Synagogue to be a considerable nuisance when gathering medieval manuscripts. His description of this process is the best account we have of the volume of printed material in the synagogue in 1897:

Such printed matter proved a source of great trouble. It is true that it occasionally supplied us with loose sheets of lost editions, and is thus of considerable interest to the bibliographer. But considering that the Genizah has survived Gutenberg for nearly five centuries, the great bulk of it is bound to be comparatively modern, and so is absolutely useless to the student of palaeography. I had, therefore, to confine my likings to the manuscripts. **But the amount of the printed fragments is very large, constituting as they do nearly all the contributions to the Genizah of the last four hundred years. Most of my time in Cairo was spent in getting rid of these *parvenus* [emphasis mine], while every piece of paper or parchment that had any claim to respectable age was packed in bags and conveyed to the forwarding agent to be shipped to England.**⁵

Many modern scholars regard the period after the sixteenth century as a sort of Genizah 'dead zone' during which Cairo's Jews deposited very little into the Ben Ezra chamber. At least in comparison to the high medieval period, the total number of extant fragments declines steeply in the 1300s. This decrease coincides with a general decline of Fustat's Jewish community in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. There is then a small uptick in manuscripts during the sixteenth century, largely from Spanish Jews and their descendants arriving in Egypt after 1492, but the number falls off again around 1600.⁶ Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Cairene Jews attended services at the Ben Ezra Synagogue less and less frequently, and by the nineteenth century the building was mostly a tourist attraction.⁷ The number of extant Genizah manuscripts from this period is correspondingly low. However, at least according to Schechter, the Ben Ezra genizah chamber once contained an inconveniently large quantity of printed items from these latter four centuries, and he spent the better part of two months "getting rid of" it.⁸

⁵ Solomon Schechter, *Studies in Judaism: Second Series* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1908), 7.

⁶ Shelomo D. Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society: The Jewish Communities of the Arab World as Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Geniza*, vol. I (Berkeley; London: University of California Press, 1967), 19; Jefferson, 'Deconstructing "the Cairo Genizah"', 426–28 (esp. 427, n. 24), 442. See also, Eleazar Gutwirth, 'Sephardi Culture of the "Cairo Genizah People" (Fifteenth to Eighteenth Centuries)', *Michael* 14 (1997): 11.

⁷ Jefferson, 'Deconstructing "the Cairo Genizah"', 429–31; Reif, *A Jewish Archive*, 14–15.

⁸ This large quantity of printed papers, presumably sitting atop the medieval fragments, may explain why Jacob Sapir failed to find any "interesting" manuscripts during the two days he spent rummaging through the genizah chamber in 1864; Jefferson, 'Deconstructing "the Cairo Genizah"', 433–34.

It would seem then that the relative lack of extant Genizah fragments from after 1600 is in part due to Schechter's (and others') selectivity, rather than simply a lack of deposits, and does not *necessarily* reflect a decline in the literary activity of the Jewish community or the use of the Ben Ezra genizah to the low levels sometimes assumed. On the other hand, it is likely that Cairo's Jews deposited much of the printed matter – particularly items printed in the nineteenth century – only after the Ben Ezra Synagogue was deconstructed and renovated in 1889–1892.⁹ Either way, Schechter's account implies that there was once much more printed Genizah material (“nearly all”) than there were manuscripts from the period between 1500 and 1900, and there were certainly many more printed items in Cairo in 1897 than what eventually ended up in England. In total, Schechter returned to Cambridge with about 190,000 paper and parchment fragments. If the so-called *parvenus* were genuinely such an obstacle that they occupied “most of” his time, then we would expect that there were, at least, many tens of thousands of printed folios. There are currently around 11,000 printed classmarks in the Cambridge University Library that survived Schechter's purge of *parvenus*, so one wonders how many thousands he discarded in Cairo.¹⁰

Further clues to the fate of Schechter's printed leftovers come from after he left Egypt. In February 1898, Riamo d'Hulst reported from Cairo to the Oxford Professor Adolf Neubauer that some fragments remained in the Ben Ezra genizah chamber, but they were mostly printed and not worth the price that it would take to purchase them (apparently eight shillings, equivalent to about £37/\$50 today). Like Schechter, Neubauer decided to leave them in Egypt.¹¹ Sixteen years later, Jack Mosseri reported on his own efforts to gather the remaining Jewish manuscripts in Cairo. He notes for the Ben Ezra Synagogue specifically:

We found out that there still existed a few documents in the Ghenizah [*sic*] at Old Cairo, which was thought to have been utterly ransacked. A careful examination

⁹ See Rebecca J.W. Jefferson, ““What Cannot Often Be Obtainable”: The Revd Greville John Chester and the Bodleian Genizah Collection’, *Journal of the History of Collections* 31, no. 2 (2019): 272, 274, 282, 285, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jhc/fhy023>. Jefferson also discusses what she calls the “super-abundance of printed matter” in Schechter's reports and suggests that Cairo's residents placed much of it into the Ben Ezra Genizah chamber at this late stage. On late Genizah material, see Nick Posegay, ‘Searching for the Last Genizah Fragment in Late Ottoman Cairo: A Material Survey of Egyptian Jewish Literary Culture’. *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 54, no. 3 (2022): 423–441. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020743822000356>.

¹⁰ The exact number of extant printed folios is uncertain. Many classmarks consist of multiple leaves, but many others are fragments of leaves.

¹¹ Rebecca J.W. Jefferson, ‘A Genizah Secret: The Count d'Hulst and Letters Revealing the Race to Recover the Lost Leaves of the Original Ecclesiasticus’, *Journal of the History of Collections* 21, no. 1 (2009): 133, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jhc/fhp003>.

of these fragments proved to us that they were of considerable value, and we naturally had them put in a safer place than the Ghenizah.¹²

We cannot be sure how many of these remnant fragments were printed, but Mosseri's favourable evaluation suggests that a large portion were handwritten manuscripts. In the same report, he also writes regarding the creation of a new Cairene Jewish communal library:

In the new institution have been collected ... manuscripts formerly scattered in the hundred and one synagogues of the Musky [sic], the Jewish Quarter in Cairo ... and books gathered from the numerous *Yeshiboth* [sic 'academies'], many of which were printed in the sixteenth century at Lisbon, Bomberg, Sabionetta, Venice, Piorda, Salonica, Constandina, etc.¹³

As we will see, Mosseri's description here is consistent with the geographical distribution of printed colophons found in the Genizah. However, the entire Mosseri Collection today only contains around 7,000 classmarks, nearly all of which are manuscripts,¹⁴ so it does not account for the printed pages that Schechter chose not to take. Indeed, if we trust Schechter's account, then most of the printed material that was once in the Ben Ezra Synagogue's genizah chamber has been lost.

This loss does not seem to have bothered the early Genizah collectors, and not much has changed in the last 125 years. Almost all Genizah scholars have been (and still are) medievalists with little to no interest in printing.¹⁵ A handful of exceptions include case studies of the earliest imprints found in the Genizah, including several partial Talmud incunabula, a pre-exile Spanish edition of Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah*, and an illustrated Passover Haggadah.¹⁶ The most extensive re-

¹² Jack Mosseri, 'A New Hoard of Jewish MSS in Cairo', *The Jewish Review*, no. 4 (1914): 210.

¹³ Mosseri, 'A New Hoard', 214–15.

¹⁴ Rebecca Jefferson and Ngaio Vince-Dewerse, 'When Curator and Conservator Meet: Some Issues Arising from the Preservation and Conservation of the Jacques Mosseri Genizah Collection at Cambridge University Library', *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 29, no. 1 (2008): 43, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00379810802499751>.

¹⁵ Leading Genizah experts have described the printed material to me as "largely ignorable."

¹⁶ Zalman Haim Dimitrovsky, ed., *S'ridei Bavli: Fragments from Spanish and Portuguese Incunabula and Sixteenth Century Printings of the Babylonian Talmud and al-Fasi* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1979); Elazar Hurvitz, *Mishneh Torah of Maimonides: A Facsimile of an Unknown Edition Printed in Spain before the Exile Reconstructed from Fragments Found in the Cairo Geniza, Ancient Bindings and Rare Editions, in Commemoration of the 850th Birthday of Maimonides* (New York: Yeshivah University: Cairo Geniza Institute, 1985); Alexander Scheiber, 'New Pages from the First Printed, Illustrated Haggadah', *Studies in Bibliography and Booklore* 7, no. 1 (1965): 26–36; Abraham Meir Haberman, 'Mi Hidpis et Ha-Haggadah Ha-Metzuyeret', *Kiryat Sefer* 47 (1972): 159–61; Y.H. Yerushalmi, *Leaves from the Oldest Illustrated Passover Haggadah* (Philadelphia, 1974); Eva Frojmovic, 'From Naples to

search into printed Genizah fragments is Dov Cohen's work on Ladino texts, which spans the whole history of printing in Europe and has identified numerous previously unknown editions.¹⁷ Still, the Ladino material makes up only a fraction of the total printed corpus, which remains arguably the least-studied part of the Genizah. Most of it is concentrated in a group of specific 'printed' folders in the Cambridge University Library,¹⁸ some of which also contain manuscripts, but other printed items are dispersed almost at random in folders of medieval material. None of these 'printed' folders have been adequately catalogued and a large majority of their contents are currently unidentified.

The lack of cataloguing data seriously hampers any potential study of printed Genizah material, but a simple method to get a sense for the contents of the printed corpus is to isolate printers' colophons. These colophons, usually 'title pages' of books, are relatively easy to spot in folders that otherwise contain hundreds of fragments of unidentified text, so they make an excellent starting point for a broader survey. The drawback of this method is that many imprints are extant in the Genizah without their colophons, and they will not be discussed here. These findings must be regarded as preliminary until a more comprehensive survey of printed Genizah fragments is completed.

GENIZAH COLOPHONS IN THE HISTORY OF HEBREW PRINTING

While printing in the Genizah is understudied, the history of Hebrew-script printing in general is quite well understood. Many past Hebrew-script printers and the locations of their presses are known, including those that printed in Hebrew, Aramaic,

Constantinople: The Aesop Workshop's Woodcuts in the Oldest Illustrated Printed Haggadah', *The Library* 18, no. 2 (1996): 87–109. See also Teicher, J.L., 'Fragments of Unknown Hebrew Incunables'. *Journal of Jewish Studies* 1, no. 2 (1948): 105–10.

<https://doi.org/10.18647/15/JJS-1948>.

¹⁷ Dov Cohen, 'Missing Treasures: Tracking Lost Ladino Books', *Zutot* 17, no. 1 (2020): 58–73, <https://doi.org/10.1163/18750214-12171085>; Ora (Rodrigue) Schwarzwald and Dov Cohen, 'El Descubrimiento de la Primera Traducción Impresa en Ladino de Pirqué Abot (Salónica, hacia 1570)', *Sefarad* 80, no. 1 (2020): 117–36,

<https://doi.org/10.3989/sefarad.020-004>; Dov Cohen, 'Novedades Bibliográficas en el Estudio de las Ediciones de Biblias Sefardíes (siglo XVI)', *Sefarad* 79, no. 1 (2019): 199–224, <https://doi.org/10.3989/sefarad.019-005>. See also, Gutwirth, 'Sephardi Culture of the "Cairo Genizah People" (Fifteenth to Eighteenth Centuries)', 27–30.

¹⁸ These folders include: T-S Misc.12–19, 30–34; T-S K18; T-S NS 25–30, 79, 85–86, 165–166, 191–192, 212–214, 266–270, 294–296, 313, 330–332; and T-S AS 189–198 (see <https://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/collections/departments/taylor-schechter-genizah-research-unit/how-collection-organised>, accessed 31 October 2021). The John Rylands Library collection known as the 'Gaster Printed Series' contains a further 650 printed shelfmarks, though they are not all from the Cairo Genizah; Posegay, 'Searching for the Last Genizah Fragment', 437.

Ladino, Yiddish, Judaeo-Italian, and other Jewish languages,¹⁹ which allows us to contextualise the Genizah colophons within the wider history of printing around Europe and the Mediterranean. In the decades after Gutenberg, the first extant Hebrew imprints are Iberian incunabula, although these largely ceased with the expulsions of Jews from Spain (1492) and Portugal (1497).²⁰ Then, in the first half of the sixteenth century, the Christian printer Daniel Bomberg established in Venice the most renowned and influential European Hebrew printing press. Italy in general, and Venice in particular, became the centre of gravity of the Hebrew printing world for the next hundred years. At the same time, however, significant Jewish printing houses also emerged in Salonika and Constantinople, most notably under the preeminent Soncino family.²¹ Italian Hebrew printing eventually declined, though it did not halt entirely, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and Amsterdam became the *de facto* capital of Hebrew printing.²² Central European cities, especially Prague and Vienna, also gained traction as loci for Hebrew printing in the eighteenth century. Vienna remained relevant well into the nineteenth century, as did Livorno as a source for Hebrew liturgical texts around the Mediterranean.²³ The nineteenth century also marks the beginning of sustained Hebrew printing in Jerusalem, first by Israel Bak in 1841.²⁴

Throughout this entire history – from Bomberg to Bak – only three abortive attempts at Hebrew-script printing in Egypt are known. First, Gershom ben Eliezer Soncino established a Hebrew press in Cairo in the 1550s. He managed to print just

¹⁹ Encyclopaedia Judaica (Germany), 'Printing, Hebrew', in *Encyclopedia Judaica* (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007), 530; Marvin J. Heller, *The Sixteenth Century Hebrew Book: An Abridged Thesaurus* (Brill, 2004); Marvin J. Heller, *The Seventeenth Century Hebrew Book: An Abridged Thesaurus* (Brill, 2010); Brad Sabin Hill, 'A "Catalogue of Hebrew Printers"', *British Library Journal* 21, no. 1 (1995): 34–65; David Werner Amram, *The Makers of Hebrew Books in Italy; Being Chapters in the History of the Hebrew Printing Press* (Philadelphia: Julius H. Greenstone, 1909); Joseph Jacobs and M. Franco, 'Typography', in *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, ed. Isidore Singer (New York; London: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1906).

²⁰ Herrman M.Z. Meyer and Angel Sáenz-Badillos, 'Incunabula', in *Encyclopedia Judaica* (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007).

²¹ Encyclopaedia Judaica (Germany), 'Printing, Hebrew', 531; Abraham Meir Haberman, *The Sons of Soncino Printers: Their Histories and the List of Books Printed by Them* (Vienna: David Frankel, 1933).

²² Fortis Umberto, 'Venice', in *Encyclopedia Judaica* (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007), 503; Encyclopaedia Judaica (Germany), 'Printing, Hebrew', 533–34; see Meir Benayahu, 'The Shift of the Centre of Hebrew Printing from Venice to Amsterdam and the Competition with the Jewish Printing in Constantinople', in *Studies on the History of Dutch Jewry*, ed. Jozeph Michman, vol. I, 1975, 41–68.

²³ Encyclopaedia Judaica (Germany), 'Printing, Hebrew', 536–37.

²⁴ Pinhas Mordecai ben Zvi Grebski, *The First Hebrew Printing House in Jerusalem* (Jerusalem: Salomon Printing House, 1939), 3–5, <https://hebrewbooks.org/36632>; Getzel Kressel, 'Bak', in *Encyclopedia Judaica* (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007), 71.

three books before his death in 1562.²⁵ Second, Abraham ben Moses Yathom printed a single two-volume Hebrew book in Cairo in 1740, but it was rather poor quality, and his press did not continue.²⁶ Finally, in 1833/34, Abraham Shalom ha-Levi produced a lithographed Passover Haggadah at the Cairene press of Moshe Qastillo.²⁷ No other books are known from this Qastillo, and Hebrew printing did not resume in Egypt until Solomon Ottolenghi and Faraj Mizrahi opened Alexandrian presses in 1862 and 1873, respectively.²⁸ Consequently, in the whole history of the Cairo Genizah, if an Egyptian Jew wanted a printed Hebrew-script book, it almost always had to come from abroad.²⁹

This brings us back to the Genizah colophons, which are, as expected, almost entirely from books printed outside of Egypt. They were deposited into the Genizah in two discrete time periods. The first is from 1520 to 1763, which sees a relatively continuous stream of European imprints entering the Ben Ezra genizah chamber, although their frequency declines in the mid-seventeenth century. The content of these books is mainly religious (Biblical books and translations, Mishnah, Talmud, haggadot, etc.), and the greatest concentration comes during the sixteenth-century peak of Italian Hebrew printing:

²⁵ *Pitron Ḥalomot* (1557), *Refu'ot ha-Talmud* (1562), and a trilingual Hebrew/Ladino/Judaeo-Greek dictionary (1557?). All three are known from Genizah fragments (respectively, T-S Misc.17.5, T-S Misc.17.6/T-S Misc.17.8, and T-S NS 268.93/T-S Misc.16.10). See Diana Rowland-Smith, 'The Beginnings of Hebrew Printing in Egypt', *British Library Journal*, 1989, 16 n. 2; Cohen, 'Missing Treasures', 70–71; Julia G. Krivoruchko, 'A Sixteenth-Century Trilingual Dictionary of Hebrew', *Fragment of the Month (January)*, Cambridge University Library: Genizah Research Unit, 2021, <https://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/collections/departments/taylor-schechter-genizah-research-unit/fragment-month/fotm-2021/fragment>; Haberman, *The Sons of Soncino*, 79; Heller, Marvin J. 'Unicums, Fragments, and Other Hebrew Book Rarities'. *Judaica Librarianship* 18 (2014): 145.

²⁶ Rowland-Smith, 'The Beginnings of Hebrew Printing in Egypt', 16–17.

²⁷ Moshe Qastillo's press was unknown before Diana Rowland-Smith published this haggadah in 1989 based on a single copy at the British Library. The Hebrew date on its colophon is כ"ג ה בארץ ר"י (5594 AM, equivalent to 1833/34 CE), quoting from Genesis 13:10; 'The Beginnings of Hebrew Printing in Egypt', 17–19. The Cambridge University Library MS T-S Misc.17.88 is five folios from the same imprint (which may supplement some missing pages in the BL copy, although I have not checked).

²⁸ Jacob M. Landau, *Jews in Nineteenth-Century Egypt*, Studies in Near Eastern Civilization 2 (New York; London: New York University Press, 1969), 93; Rowland-Smith, 'The Beginnings of Hebrew Printing in Egypt', 21.

²⁹ For Jewish printing in the immediate post-Genizah period, see Landau, *Jews in Nineteenth-Century Egypt*, 100–103.

Table 1. Printed Hebrew-Script Colophons in the Cairo Genizah, 1520–1627

Classmark	Date	Location	Printer
T-S NS 331.17	1520	Salonika	Joseph b. Abraham b. Alnaqua
T-S NS 166.98	1520/21	Venice	Daniel Bomberg
T-S Misc.18.51	1521	Venice	Daniel Bomberg
T-S AS 191.639	1528/29	Salonika	Joseph Sayyid at the press of Judah Gedaliah
T-S AS 191.666 ³⁰	1541/42	Salonika	Unidentified
T-S AS 189.51	1543	Salonika	Unidentified
T-S NS 192.83	1546/47	Venice	Daniel Bomberg
T-S AS 192.356 ³¹	1550/51	Constantinople	Moses [...]
T-S NS 214.71	c. 1552	Venice	Vittorio Eliano at the press of Alvise Bragadini
T-S Misc.18.73	1553	Sabbioneta	Cornelio Adelkind at the press of Tobias Foa
T-S Misc.19.118	1554	Sabbioneta	Cornelio Adelkind(?) at the press of Tobias Foa
T-S Misc.17.5	1557	Cairo	Gershom b. Eliezer Soncino
T-S NS 268.93 ³²	c. 1557–1562	Cairo	Gershom b. Eliezer Soncino
T-S Misc.14.41 ³³	1558	Salonika	Joseph b. Isaac b. R. Joseph Ya'beš
T-S Misc.19.108	c. 1558–1566 ³⁴	Salonika	Joseph b. Isaac b. R. Joseph Ya'beš ³⁵

³⁰ Discussed by Elazar Hurvitz, *Editions of Tractate Bava Kamma Printed in Salonika: A Study Based on Fragments of an Unknown Edition, with Facsimiles of the Various Editions and Fragments from the Cairo Geniza* (New York: Yeshiva University: Cairo Geniza Institute, 1986), 20, 43.

³¹ T-S Misc.17.105 is also from Constantinople and may be from the same printer.

³² Belongs with T-S Misc. 16.10. Only a small portion of the colophon's border survives. Dov Cohen identified it as a likely product of Gershom ben Eliezer Soncino's Cairene press based on comparison with T-S Misc. 17.5; Cohen, 'Missing Treasures', 70–71. See also, Krivo-ruchko, 'A Sixteenth-Century Trilingual Dictionary'.

³³ See Hurvitz, *Editions of Tractate Bava Kamma*, 38.

³⁴ The extant fragment has no date but refers to the Ottoman government of Suleiman the Magnificent (d. 1566).

³⁵ Schwarzwald and Cohen have identified numerous Genizah fragments belonging to 18 folios of an early Ladino edition of *Pirque Avot* that Joseph Ya'beš printed in Salonika around 1570; Ora (Rodrigue) Schwarzwald and Dov Cohen, 'El Descubrimiento de la Primera Tra-

T-S AS 197.586	1560/61	Riva di Trento	Jacob Marcaria on behalf of Joseph Ottolenghi
T-S Misc.17.8 ³⁶	1562	Cairo	Gershom b. Eliezer Soncino
T-S AS 189.22	1591/92	Venice	Giovanni Di Gara
T-S Misc.17.77	1591/92	Venice	Giovanni Di Gara
T-S NS 270.167 ³⁷	1619	Venice	Pietro and Lorenzo Bragadini
T-S AS 194.177	c. 1624 ³⁸	Venice	Pietro, Alvise, and Lorenzo Bragadini at the press of Giovanni Caleoni
Yevr.-Arab. II 1272	1627	Venice	Pietro, Alvise, and Lorenzo Bragadini at the press of Giovanni Caleoni

Not surprisingly, some of the earliest printed books that reached the Egyptian Jewish community were high-quality Talmud (1520/21) and Mishnah (1521) imprints by the Antwerp-native Venetian printer, Daniel Bomberg. Bomberg was one of the first Christian printers of Hebrew books, necessary in Europe due to official prohibitions against Jewish printing, and his were the first complete printed editions of the Talmud in history.³⁹ Competition with Bomberg's press came from Jewish publishers in Salonika and Constantinople, where the Ottoman government permitted greater freedom for Jews to print.⁴⁰ Of the extant Salonikan colophons from this stage, the earliest belongs to an edition of Nahmanides' Bible commentary that Joseph ben Abraham ben Alnaqua printed in 1520.⁴¹ Another is from the well-known press of Don Judah Gedaliah (1528/29), a Portuguese refugee and the first person

ducción Impresa en Ladino de Pirqué Abot (Salónica, hacia 1570)', *Sefarad* 80, no. 1 (2020): 122, <https://doi.org/10.3989/sefarad.020-004>.

³⁶ Belongs with T-S Misc.17.6.

³⁷ Joins to T-S AS 197.305.

³⁸ The date is lost from the fragment but estimated based on comparison with other Bragadini colophons from this period.

³⁹ Abraham Meir Haberman, 'Bomberg, Daniel', in *Encyclopedia Judaica* (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007), 52; Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin, 'Persecution and the Art of Printing: Hebrew Books in Italy in the 1550s', in *Jewish Culture in Early Modern Europe: Essays in Honor of David B. Ruderman*, ed. Richard I. Cohen et al. (Pittsburgh; Cincinnati: University of Pittsburgh Press & Hebrew Union College Press, 2014), 100.

⁴⁰ Abraham Haim et al., 'Istanbul', in *Encyclopedia Judaica* (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007), 784.

⁴¹ See Recanati, David A. *Zikhron Šaloniki*. Tel-Aviv: ha-Ṿa'ad le-hotsa'at sefer kehilat Šaloniki, 1971, 231; Jacobs and Franco. 'Typography', 314.

to establish Hebrew-script printing in Salonika.⁴² The one colophon from Constantinople (1550/51) is little more than a scrap. The partial name “Moses [...]” remains, which may indicate Moses ben Eliezer Parnas, a partner of the Soncino family who took over their press in 1547.⁴³ It is interesting that there are no other Soncino colophons from the first half of the fifteenth century, given their substantial activity in Salonika in the 1520s and Constantinople in the 1530s–1540s.⁴⁴ This lack does not mean that no Soncino imprints ever reached the Cairo Genizah from these cities, but instead seems to reflect a random gap in identifiable colophons that survived to the present day. Cohen, for example, recently identified a dozen sixteenth-century Ladino imprints in Genizah collections, including several by Soncino printers, and Ronny Vollandt has identified some thirty pages of a 1546 Soncino polyglot Pentateuch printed in Constantinople.⁴⁵ It should further be noted that the sixteenth-century colophons discussed here are not the oldest imprints in the Genizah, but few colophons survive among the incunabula fragments.⁴⁶

Bomberg's press closed in 1548, and by 1553 a dispute among his successors led papal authorities to burn copies of the Talmud throughout Italy.⁴⁷ One of the

⁴² Jacob Hirsch Haberman, ‘Gedaliah, (Don) Judah’, in *Encyclopedia Judaica* (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007), 407. Another fragment (T-S NS 330.12) has a border made up of the same motifs used in Gedaliah's colophon on T-S AS 191.639. It may also be from his press in Salonika.

⁴³ Abraham Meir Haberman, ‘Soncino’, in *Encyclopedia Judaica* (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007), 10.

⁴⁴ Encyclopaedia Judaica (Germany), ‘Printing, Hebrew’, 531.

⁴⁵ Cohen, ‘Missing Treasures’, 64–71; Ronny Vollandt, ‘The Constantinople Polyglot of 1546’, *Genizah Fragments*, 2010.

⁴⁶ The incunabula are mostly from Iberian printers, for example: T-S AS 189.1 and T-S AS 189.50 are fragments of Babylonian Talmud tractate *Qiddushin*, printed by Solomon ibn Alkabeş (Guadalajara, c. 1480–82). T-S AS 189.52, T-S AS 189.77, T-S NS 192.63, T-S NS 316.5, T-S NS 331.5, T-S NS 331.6, T-S NS 331.14, T-S Misc.19.2, T-S Misc.19.37, and T-S Misc.19.116 are from tractate *Berakhot* by the same printer. T-S 189.35, T-S AS 189.37, T-S AS 189.41, T-S AS 189.45, T-S NS 331.8, T-S NS 331.9, T-S NS 331.11, and T-S Misc.12.38.1 are from another edition of tractate *Berakhot* printed by Samuel Porteiro (Faro, c. 1496). See ‘Incunabula Short Title Catalogue’ (The British Library), nos. it0015320, it00015060, it00015100, accessed 22 March 2022, <https://www.bl.uk/catalogues/istc/>. For further details, see Marvin J. Heller, *Printing the Talmud: A History of the Earliest Printed Editions of the Talmud* (Brooklyn: Im HaSefer, 1992); Dimitrovsky, *S'ridei Bavli*; Israel Dubitsky, ‘First International Census of Earliest Printed Editions of [Tractates of] the Babylonian Talmud: Prints from Incunables through Bomberg’, accessed 23 August 2022, <https://www.lieberman-institute.com/resources/Dubitsky.html>.

⁴⁷ Raz-Krakotzkin, ‘Persecution and the Art of Printing’, 99–102; Ann Brener, *Sixteenth-Century Hebrew Books at the Library of Congress: A Finding Aid* (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 2012), vi, <https://guides.loc.gov/16th-century-hebrew-books>; Yvonne Glikson,

people responsible for this decision was a Catholic convert, Vittorio Eliano, who made his career as a censor of Hebrew books. Vittorio was the grandson of Rabbi Elijah Levita Ashkenazi, an ex-employee of Bomberg,⁴⁸ and it seems he occasionally took after his grandfather in the printing business. T-S NS 214.71 is a fragment of a Hebrew wall calendar for the year 5314 AM (1553/54 CE) that, according to its colophon, Vittorio printed at the Venetian press of Alvise Bragadini.⁴⁹ As far as I know, this fragment is the only extant evidence of Vittorio Eliano working as a printer, rather than a censor, prior to his involvement in editing the *Zohar* at Cremona around 1558.⁵⁰

In 1554, Pope Julius III banned the printing of the Talmud in Italy, and all Hebrew printing was banned in Venice between 1553 and 1563. The colophons in the Cairo Genizah reflect the subsequent decentralisation of Italian Hebrew printing and the reduction of the Venetian book supply.⁵¹ Cairene Jews still maintained some relationship with Salonika in this period, evidenced by two colophons from the press of Joseph Ya'beš (1558, c. 1558–66).⁵² They supplemented this source with non-Venetian Italian printers. From Sabbioneta come two colophons that Cornelio Adelkind, one of Bomberg's former assistants, printed at the press of Tobias Foa (1553 and 1554).⁵³ Similarly, from Riva di Trento is a single colophon (1560/61) that Jacob Marcaria printed at a short-lived press funded by Joseph Ottolenghi.⁵⁴ It also seems that the Venetian ban on Hebrew printing presented a brief window of opportunity for Gershom ben Eliezer Soncino to meet an Egyptian Jewish demand for printed Hebrew books, establishing, as he did, his own short-lived press in Cairo (c. 1557–1562).

⁴⁸ 'Talmud, Burning Of', in *Encyclopedia Judaica* (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007), 482–83.

⁴⁹ Meir Medan, 'Levita, Elijah', in *Encyclopedia Judaica* (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007), 731.

⁵⁰ My thanks to Nadia Vidro for her help in identifying and dating this fragment.

⁵¹ Meir Benayahu, *Hebrew Printing in Cremona: Its History and Bibliography* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University: Ben Zvi Institute, 1971), 99; Medan, 'Levita, Elijah', 731; Richard Gottheil et al., 'Censorship of Hebrew Books', in *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, ed. Isidore Singer (New York; London: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1906), 648.

⁵² Encyclopaedia Judaica (Germany), 'Printing, Hebrew', 532; Fred Skolnik and Michael Berenbaum, eds., 'Bragadini', in *Encyclopedia Judaica* (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007), 117.

⁵³ See Encyclopaedia Judaica (Germany), 'Printing, Hebrew', 533; Hurvitz, *Editions of Tractate Bava Kamma*, 38.

⁵⁴ Abraham Meir Haberman, 'Adelkind, Israel Cornelius', in *Encyclopedia Judaica* (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007), 386. See Amram, *The Makers of Hebrew Books*, 149, 187; Abraham Meir Haberman, *The Printer Cornelio Adelkind and his Son Daniel* (Jerusalem: Reuven Mass, 1980).

⁵⁵ Amram, *The Makers of Hebrew Books*, 296; Giorgio Romano, 'Ottolenghi, Joseph Ben Nathan', in *Encyclopedia Judaica* (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007), 519.

Hebrew-script printing resumed in Venice in 1564. It regained some of its former influence under the auspices of another of Bomberg's students (and the inheritor of his type), Giovanni Di Gara, as well as the prolific Bragadini family.⁵⁵ Two Di Gara colophons are extant in the Genizah, both from the same edition of *Megillat Esther* (1591/92) by Isaac Leon ben Eliezer ibn Šur. Then three Bragadini colophons, printed under the supervision of Giovanni Caleoni,⁵⁶ bring us into the 1620s and the effective end of Italian dominance in Hebrew printing. We must note here two possible breaks in the timeline, as none of the colophons in our corpus come from 1562–1591 or 1592–1619. This reduction in colophons may imply a similar reduction in the quantity of printed books sent to Cairo in the second half of the sixteenth century, potentially related to a commensurate decline in the fortunes of the Cairene Jewish community and the use of the Ben Ezra Genizah. A more thorough survey of printed Genizah material could illuminate this issue.

In 1625, Manasseh ben Israel founded the first Hebrew printing press in Amsterdam. Already the premiere centre for printing and book trade in Europe, Amsterdam quickly became the most dominant city for Hebrew-script printing and remained so well into the eighteenth century.⁵⁷ There are fewer Genizah colophons from this period than from the sixteenth century, again probably reflecting a decline in the use of the Ben Ezra genizah chamber as fewer Jews attended the synagogue,⁵⁸ but they show no trace of the rise of Amsterdam in Hebrew printing:

Table 2. Printed Hebrew-Script Colophons in the Cairo Genizah, 1628–1763

Classmark	Date	Location	Printer
T-S AS 197.464	1646/47	Venice	Stamparia Vendramina
T-S NS 268.115	1648/49	Venice	Andrea Vendramin Faransi(?)
T-S AS 190.84	1663	Venice?	Unidentified
T-S Misc.16.118	1668/69	Constantinople	Abraham b. Solomon Franco
T-S Misc.15.3	1686/87	Venice	Stamparia Vendramina
T-S NS 266.74	1704/05	Venice	N.H.S. Alvise Bragadini

⁵⁵ Giulio Busi, 'Di Gara, Giovanni', in *Encyclopedia Judaica* (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007), 659–60; Skolnik and Berenbaum, 'Bragadini'; Encyclopaedia Judaica (Germany), 'Printing, Hebrew', 532.

⁵⁶ Encyclopaedia Judaica (Germany), 'Printing, Hebrew', 532.

⁵⁷ Harm den Boer, 'Amsterdam as "Locus" of Iberian Printing in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries', in *The Dutch Intersection: The Jews and the Netherlands in Modern History*, ed. Yosef Kaplan (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 87, 91, <https://doi.org/10.1163/ej.9789004149960.i-450.21>; A.K. Offenbergs and Cecil Roth, 'Manasseh Ben Israel', in *Encyclopedia Judaica* (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007), 454; Encyclopaedia Judaica (Germany), 'Printing, Hebrew', 533; see also, Herbert C. Zafren, 'Amsterdam: Center of Hebrew Printing in the Seventeenth Century', *Jewish Book Annual* 35 (1977): 47–55.

⁵⁸ See Jefferson, 'Deconstructing "the Cairo Genizah"', 429.

T-S AS 196.355	c. 1704/05 ⁵⁹	Venice	N.H.S. Alvise Bragadini
AIU XI.127 ⁶⁰	1742	Venice	Stamparia Vendramina
Rylands GPS 185	1749/50	Venice	Stamparia Bragadina, likely in association with the Foa family
T-S AS 197.80	1757/58	Venice	Stamparia Bragadina in association with the Foa family
Moss. Ia.36	1763	Fuerth	Isaac Itzik ben Leib

Even as European Jews began preferring imprints from the north of the continent, it seems that Egyptians continued to purchase printed Hebrew books almost exclusively from Venice. Eight or nine of the eleven colophons in this period come from Venetian printers (one remains unidentified). Four belong to the press of Alvise Bragadini, which retained his name long after his death in 1575. Another four are from the Vendramini family, which began printing in 1631 even as Amsterdam was on the rise. Italian Hebrew printing of this era was of a lower quality than the sixteenth century ‘golden age’, and in contrast to the grand Talmuds and Bibles of Bomberg and the earlier Bragadinis, these colophons are mostly from shorter *siddurim* (‘prayer books’).⁶¹ We can only speculate as to why Cairo’s Jews relied on Venice above all other sources for printed books. Perhaps this choice was merely borne of convenience, as Italian cities were relatively close to Egypt. It may also be that, as the Cairene Jewish community declined, its ability to purchase expensive volumes from Europe diminished,⁶² and what little printing they did acquire had to be shorter prayer books from nearby ports. What we cannot say from this small sample of colophons is how much those Venetian Hebrew printers relied on Middle Eastern customers to keep their presses financially solvent in the face of a less friendly European market.

The two other colophons in this period are from Constantinople and Fuerth. Abraham ben Solomon Franco printed the first one in 1668/69, continuing work at a press his father had established in 1638.⁶³ The second was printed by Isaac Itzik ben Leib (1763), one of several Hebrew printers who emerged in Bavaria during the eighteenth century.⁶⁴ This fragment is part of the Mosseri Collection, and it may

⁵⁹ Date estimated based on comparison with T-S NS 266.74.

⁶⁰ This fragment is an Italian license permitting Stamparia Vendramina to print a Hebrew book. It appeared in the frontmatter of that book.

⁶¹ Encyclopaedia Judaica (Germany), ‘Printing, Hebrew’, 536.

⁶² On the historical price of books, see Yaron Ben-Na’eh, ‘Hebrew Printing Houses in the Ottoman Empire’, in *Jewish Journalism and Printing Houses in the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, ed. Gad Nassi (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2001), 77.

⁶³ Encyclopaedia Judaica (Germany), ‘Printing, Hebrew’, 536.

⁶⁴ Jacobs and Franco, ‘Typography’, 304–6; Encyclopaedia Judaica (Germany), ‘Printing, Hebrew’, 530, 534–36.

be one of the fragments that Jack Mosseri collected from another Cairene synagogue between 1909 and 1912.⁶⁵ Despite the large number of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Hebrew printing houses known in Germany, there are no other German colophons in our corpus.

After 1763, there is a period of almost 100 years in which it seems there are no printed European colophons in the Genizah collections. This gap corresponds with the Ben Ezra Synagogue's lowest historical level of active worship and the presumed lowest period for deposits into its genizah chamber.⁶⁶ The absence of colophons could also be, in part, the result of further reduced engagement with the European book market, which would itself be a natural consequence of a community on the decline. That said, the use of the Ben Ezra genizah may not have ceased completely, as numerous other fragments are dated to the interim period.⁶⁷ Among them are two Egyptian colophons printed in the early nineteenth century:

Table 3. Printed Hebrew-Script Colophons in the Cairo Genizah, 1764–1857

Classmark	Date	Location	Printer
T-S NS 269.1/ T-S AS 103.27	before(?) 1833	Cairo	Probably Moshe Qastillo
T-S Misc.17.88	1833/34	Cairo	Abraham Shalom ha-Levi at the new press of Moshe Qastillo

One of these colophons is from a copy of the lithographed Passover Haggadah printed at the “new press of Moshe Qastillo” (1833/34), mentioned above as one of the few historical attempts to establish Hebrew printing in Egypt.⁶⁸ The other (T-S NS 269.1/T-S AS 103.27) is from a previously unknown *shiviti* wall hanging, most likely printed by the same Moshe Qastillo. It bears no date, but reads: “printed in

⁶⁵ Mosseri, ‘A New Hoard’, 215. See also, Israel Adler, *Catalogue of the Jack Mosseri Collection*, ed. Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts (Jerusalem: Jewish National and University Library, 1990), XXI–XXIX.

⁶⁶ Reif, *A Jewish Archive*, 14–15.

⁶⁷ For example, AIU VII.E.29 (1764), T-S 8J20.32 (1769), CUL Or.1080 J83 (1772), ENA 3314.7 (1776), AIU IX.B.23 (1785), ENA 2634.13/ENA 2634.14 (1787), T-S AS 144.232 (1791), T-S Ar.30.233 (1794), AIU VII.D.59 (1795), T-S 10J13.29 (1800/01), T-S 16.332 (1816), T-S K2.92 (1821/22); T-S K10.16 (1822/23); Manchester Gaster Ar.47 (1826); T-S 10J13.27 (1827); T-S 16.331 (1830); T-S Misc.34.26 (1842); and AIU VII.E.239 (1852). See also Cohen, ‘Missing Treasures’, 63; Delbes, Pierre. ‘Les documents datés de la Geniza du Caire (Université de Cambridge) (Westminster College Cambridge): Liste chronologique des documents datés Répertoire’. *École des hautes études du judaïsme*, 1992, 53–54. It is likely that many of these fragments were stored in the Basatin cemetery or another Cairene genizah, rather than the Ben Ezra Synagogue's genizah chamber. It remains up for debate whether *all* fragments dated to this period come from other genizot.

⁶⁸ Rowland-Smith, ‘The Beginnings of Hebrew Printing in Egypt’, 17–19.

Egypt at the pr[ess] of Mis[ter] Moshe Kas[...].” This inscription is not a definitive identification, since Qastillo spells his name קאשטילו in the Haggadah, and here it is abbreviated כאט.⁶⁹ However, the small rosette beneath the title of the Haggadah and the decorative mark above Qastillo’s name both appear with the menorah figure in the *shiviti*, reinforcing their connection. If we can accept some variation in the transliteration of non-Hebrew names in the early nineteenth century, then the most likely explanation is that Qastillo printed this *shiviti* at his “old” press, before the Haggadah. If not, then the *shiviti* is a product of a previously unknown Hebrew-script printer in Cairo that shared some decorative elements with Qastillo.

While it seems no European colophons dated between 1764 and 1857 appear in the Genizah, after that, the quantity of imprints balloons well beyond all previous periods. They now include both longer Biblical books and shorter religious texts like *haggadot* and *siddurim*:

Table 4. Printed Hebrew-Script Colophons in the Cairo Genizah, 1858–1889

Classmark	Date	Location	Printer
T-S NS 25.129	1858/59	Livorno	Israel Qushto & Co.
T-S NS 166.133	1863/64	Trieste	Jonah Kohen
T-S NS 26.270	1864	Vienna	Josef Schlesinger
T-S NS 25.179	1865/66	Livorno	Solomon Belforte & Co.
T-S NS 30.176	1865/66	Jerusalem	Abraham Rotenberg
T-S AS 197.294	1867	Vienna	Josef Schlesinger
T-S NS 30.233	1869	Vienna	Josef Schlesinger
T-S NS 26.145	1869	Vienna	Josef Schlesinger
T-S AS 198.194	c. 1872–1897	Jerusalem	Isaac Gashtsinni
T-S Misc.34.11	1874/75	Salonika	Sa’adi ha-Levi Ashkenazi
T-S AS 194.401	1875/76	Vienna	Unidentified
T-S Misc.34.21 ⁷⁰	1876	Izmir	Unidentified
T-S AS 192.201	1876/77	Livorno	Israel Qushto & Co.
T-S NS 165.200	1877	Vienna	Josef Schlesinger
T-S AS 191.716	1878	Warsaw	Yitzhak Goldman
T-S NS 25.149	1878	Vienna	Josef Schlesinger
T-S NS 165.62	1882	Vienna	Josef Schlesinger
T-S AS 197.357	1882/83	Livorno	Eliahu ben Amuzg & Co.
Rylands GPS 175	1884	Vienna	Josef Schlesinger

⁶⁹ The full Hebrew note reads: נדפס פה מצרים יע בדפ של סי משה כאט היו אמן.

⁷⁰ Identified by Cohen, ‘Missing Treasures’, 64, n. 35.

and 213			
Rylands GPS 161	1886/87	Livorno	Solomon Belforte & Co.
T-S NS 85.96	1887/88	Alexandria	Faraj Mizrahi
T-S NS 165.17	1889	Vienna	Druck von Adolf Holzhausen

Here we find a printing landscape markedly different from the earlier periods. After the apparent break in printed Genizah deposits, they resume in the second half of the nineteenth century with no trace of Venetian presses. This tendency corresponds to a general shift in Hebrew printing eastward, away from both Italy and Amsterdam and into eastern Europe. Vienna became the dominant city in this new environment. It is represented in our corpus almost exclusively by the publishing house of Josef Schlesinger, a leading printer of Hebrew-script liturgical material in the second half of the nineteenth century.⁷¹ Eight colophons come from Schlesinger's press (almost all biblical books), with just two others (1875/76, 1889) from his Austrian competitors. The only European colophon from farther east is a product of Yitzhak Goldman (1878), the largest Jewish printer and bookseller in 1870s Warsaw.⁷² All of these eastern European books made their way to Cairo within a few decades of production, no later than 1897.

A significant exception to the eastward shift of European Hebrew-script printing is Livorno ('Leghorn'), which rose in the second half of the eighteenth century as a key source of liturgical texts for Jewish communities around the Mediterranean.⁷³ Five of the printed Genizah colophons are from Livorno, and they likely came to Cairo with the influx of Italian Jews that migrated to Egypt during the nineteenth century.⁷⁴ Among them are imprints from the renowned Solomon Belforte & Company (1865/66, 1887/88),⁷⁵ as well as Eliahu ben Amuzg (1882/83) and Israel Qushto (1858/59, 1876/77). Livorno is known as a major centre for Ladino printing in this period,⁷⁶ and one of these Qushto publications (1858/59) is a Passover

⁷¹ Encyclopaedia Judaica (Germany), 'Printing, Hebrew', 536–37.

⁷² Nathan Cohen, 'Distributing Knowledge: Warsaw as a Center of Jewish Publishing, 1850–1914', in *Warsaw: The Jewish Metropolis*, ed. Glenn Dynner and François Guesnet (Brill, 2015), 183–84, https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004291812_009. See Krivoruchko, Julia G. 'A Tale of a Torn Title Page: T-S AS 191.716'. *Fragment of the Month (February)*, Cambridge University Library: Genizah Research Unit, 2022.

<https://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/collections/departments/taylor-schechter-genizah-research-unit/fragment-month/fotm-2022/fragment>.

⁷³ Encyclopaedia Judaica (Germany), 'Printing, Hebrew', 537–38; Rowland-Smith, 'The Beginnings of Hebrew Printing in Egypt', 17. See also, Jacobs and Franco, 'Typography', 306.

⁷⁴ Landau, *Jews in Nineteenth-Century Egypt*, 25–26.

⁷⁵ See Encyclopaedia Judaica (Germany), 'Printing, Hebrew', 538.

⁷⁶ Dov Cohen, 'Kuatrosientos Anyos de Publikaciones en Ladino en Italia', in *Judeo-Spanish (Ladino): Sephardic Culture and Tradition, Past, Present, and Future* (Livorno: Salomone Belforte & Co., 2005), 149–50.

Haggadah with Ladino translation. The only other Italian city with a nineteenth-century colophon is Trieste, where Jonah Cohen printed an elegant Haggadah in 1864.⁷⁷

Several colophons here come from printers in Ottoman territory, though perhaps not as many as we might expect. Two are from Ladino books produced at Salonika (1874/75) and Izmir (1876).⁷⁸ The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were the most productive period for Ladino printing – especially in Salonika, Constantinople, and Izmir – by a wide margin, and about twenty times more Ladino publications are known from those cities than from Livorno.⁷⁹ It is also well-documented that Spanish-speaking Jews who fled to Egypt in the aftermath of the 1492 Spanish exile maintained a distinct Sephardi community that spoke Ladino until after the end of the Genizah period.⁸⁰ As such, it would be reasonable to expect a survey of Cairo Genizah printing to find many more nineteenth-century Ladino texts from Ottoman cities than from other locations. From our data it seems they do not appear at the higher rate expected in comparison to European cities. Even at this late stage, Middle Eastern imprints may have reached Cairo at a lower rate than those from Europe.⁸¹

Hebrew-script printing in the nineteenth century also proliferated beyond the major Ottoman cities like Salonika and Constantinople,⁸² and it is here that we first see colophons from Jerusalem and Alexandria. One is from the book *Sefer ha-Goralot l-Ahitophal*, printed by Abraham Rotenberg in 1865/66. Rotenberg, along with his son-in-law, Joel Moshe Salomon, established the Salomon Printing House in Jerusalem in 1861/62,⁸³ although this colophon states that it comes from Rotenberg's own "new" press a few years later. The other Jerusalem colophon is not from a book, but rather a decorative wall hanging featuring pictures of famous sites in the Holy Land. Isaac Gashtsinni, a Polish immigrant to Jerusalem, printed it some-

⁷⁷ Shlomo Simonsohn and Samuele Rocca, 'Trieste', in *Encyclopedia Judaica* (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007), 145.

⁷⁸ Cohen, 'Missing Treasures', 64, esp. n. 35. For the Salonikan printer Sa'adi ha-Levi Ashkenazi, see Dov Cohen, 'Sa'adi ha-Levi Ashkenazi (Salonika, 1819–1903): An Updated Biography', *Sefunot* 29 (2019): 405–44.

⁷⁹ Cohen, 'Kuatrosientos Anyos', 147–48; Ben-Na'eh, 'Hebrew Printing Houses in the Ottoman Empire', 76–77, 84–85, 90–91.

⁸⁰ Gutwirth, 'Sephardi Culture of the "Cairo Genizah People" (Fifteenth to Eighteenth Centuries)', 11–12; Cohen, 'Missing Treasures', 62–63; Landau, *Jews in Nineteenth-Century Egypt*, 26, 30, 68 n. 97, 119, 214, esp. 232.

⁸¹ Although note recent discoveries of late Ottoman Ladino imprints that survived in the Genizah without their colophons; Cohen, 'Missing Treasures', 64.

⁸² Ben-Na'eh, 'Hebrew Printing Houses in the Ottoman Empire', 76; Mohammed Basil Suleiman, 'Early Printing Presses in Palestine: A Historical Note', *Jerusalem Quarterly* 36 (2009): 81, 84.

⁸³ Grebski, *The First Hebrew Printing House in Jerusalem*, 8; Yehuda Slutsky, 'Salomon, Joel Moses', in *Encyclopedia Judaica* (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007), 698.

time between 1872 and 1897.⁸⁴ Finally, one of our last colophons is from a Hebrew drill book that the Iranian immigrant Faraj Mizrahi printed in Alexandria (1887/88). The classmark T-S NS 85.96 includes two versions of this colophon, one with a star of David, and one without. Numerous fragments of Hebrew amulets that Abraham Zaytuni printed at Mizrahi's press are also extant in Genizah collections, easily identifiable by their distinctive blue ink.⁸⁵ Mizrahi was the first person in Egyptian history to establish a truly successful Hebrew publishing house, printing more than 50 books between 1873 and 1913, well beyond the end of the Genizah period.⁸⁶ His career is thus an appropriate endpoint for our survey.

CONCLUSION

The more than 12,000 printed classmarks in Cairo Genizah collections are largely uncatalogued and severely understudied. The reason for their current situation extends back to the discovery of the Genizah, as early collectors like Neubauer and Schechter prioritised manuscripts at the expense of printed material. They ultimately left behind or (so it seems), destroyed much of what was once in the Ben Ezra Synagogue's genizah chamber. As a result, the extant printed fragments are likely only a fraction of what was once in Cairo, and they are a fraction that later Genizah scholars have neglected. This survey has sought to impose some order on the uncatalogued material by examining its most easily identifiable folios, namely, printers' colophons. While we cannot be sure that the colophons in our corpus are representative of the entire bloc of printed items that were originally in the Genizah – to some degree, we must assume they are not – we can make preliminary observations to guide further inquiries.

The Cairene Jewish community had access to printed Hebrew books almost from the beginning of printing. Some of the earliest Iberian incunabula did reach Cairo, probably with post-1492 Spanish refugees, and from the 1520s on we find extant printers' colophons. The first ones are the work of Daniel Bomberg, and subsequent sixteenth-century Genizah colophons follow the general trajectory of Hebrew publishers in the 'golden age' of Italian printing. Before 1553, they reflect competition between Venice, Salonika, and Constantinople. From 1553–1563, they show the decentralisation of Italian publishing houses in the wake of the ban against Hebrew printing in Venice. After the ban ended, the extant colophons suggest that Cairene Jews relied almost exclusively on Venice as their source of printed Hebrew books. Curiously, we have not (yet) found any sixteenth-century colophons from Mantua, despite its prominence in Italian printing while Venetian

⁸⁴ Shoshanah Halevi, *The First Books of Jerusalem* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University: Ben Zvi Institute, 1976), 37–38.

⁸⁵ For example, T-S AS 193.141–150.

⁸⁶ Rowland-Smith, 'The Beginnings of Hebrew Printing in Egypt', 21.

printers were shuttered.⁸⁷ We also have not identified any colophons from the Soncino presses in Italy, Salonika, or Constantinople during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries,⁸⁸ nor indeed any Salonikan or Constantinopolitan colophons whatsoever from the late 1560s until 1669. Some imprints fitting these descriptions do exist in Genizah collections,⁸⁹ albeit lacking colophons, and others likely remain unidentified.

The rise of Amsterdam as the centre of Hebrew printing after about 1627 marked a turning point for the history of Hebrew printing in Europe, coinciding with a decline of Italian presses in favour of more northern publishers. However, this development does not seem to have affected the Jews of Cairo. Instead, they continued to rely primarily on Venice for Hebrew printing, with no colophons from Amsterdam and only one from Germany appearing in the Genizah between 1627 and 1764. This period also marks a decline in the quantity of printed items in the Genizah, corresponding to the decline in the status of the Cairene Jewish community during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. None of the European colophons in our corpus are dated between 1764 and 1857, signaling what appears to be even further reduction in the purchasing power of Cairene Jews and the use of the Ben Ezra genizah chamber. The only two colophons from this period were printed in Cairo, probably at the press(es) of Moshe Qastillo. One of them is known solely from the Genizah.

The second half of the nineteenth century saw a significant revival in printed Genizah deposits, although rather than Venice, colophons of this period are mostly from Livorno and Vienna. Both cities were major sources of printed liturgical material for nineteenth-century Jews, and some of the colophons likely came to Cairo with Jewish immigrants. Colophons from smaller Ottoman presses also appear during this period, including from Izmir, Jerusalem, and Alexandria. We note that all the colophons in this portion of our corpus are dated to the three decades before 1889, which is the year when the Cairene Jewish community dismantled and renovated the Ben Ezra Synagogue. For three years, the Genizah contents were laid bare in the synagogue courtyard, kept in a subterranean room, or buried, and only in 1892 were they returned to the restored Genizah chamber.⁹⁰ During and after this time, it would have been easy for local Jews to add their used books to the previously neglected Genizah, especially given the potential financial incentives afford-

⁸⁷ Encyclopaedia Judaica (Germany), 'Printing, Hebrew', 532.

⁸⁸ See Haberman, 'Soncino'; Amram, *The Makers of Hebrew Books*, 51–115.

⁸⁹ See again, Cohen, 'Missing Treasures', 64–71; Vollandt, 'The Constantinople Polyglot of 1546'.

⁹⁰ Rebecca J.W. Jefferson, *The Cairo Genizah and the Age of Discovery in Egypt: The History and Provenance of a Jewish Archive* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2022), 65–88; Hoffman and Cole, *Sacred Trash*, 38–39.

ed by European collectors in search of old papers.⁹¹ This situation likely explains the high density of colophons dated between 1858 and 1889. Furthermore, that density shows that Cairo's Jews had wide access to European books during this period.

Despite their neglect for so many years, the printed sections of Cairo Genizah collections are worthy of further study,⁹² not just for Genizah history, but also for the histories of Hebrew printing, bibliography, and book culture more broadly. Close comparisons of typography between Genizah fragments and known publishers – beyond the scope of this survey – will undoubtedly identify many more foreign imprints that Cairene Jews read in Egypt. Potential candidates for this type of analysis include several colophons that so far have not been matched to printing houses. For example, T-S AS 195.531 and Rylands GPS 174 are fragments from two copies of the same Passover Haggadah with Ladino translation, although their date, printer, and location are missing. T-S AS 198.549 is a small fragment, probably a Bragadini colophon, but the title, date, and location are likewise lost. T-S AS 191.759 is torn from another nineteenth-century wall hanging, likely from Jerusalem. Its only hint at a printer is the word 'Bebber' in Latin type. T-S AS 196.270 is badly damaged but may bear the date 1522.⁹³ Finally, T-S Misc.17.94 (p4, recto) includes a partial colophon from what appears to be a previously unknown, and perhaps the earliest extant, edition of *Shoḥate ha-Yeladim* by Israel ben Moses Najara.⁹⁴

Besides colophons, a more in-depth survey that identifies all manner of fragmentary printed Genizah texts and their publishers will prove fruitful. We should expect such a survey to turn up large quantities of imprints from across Europe and the Ottoman Empire, all of which necessarily came to Cairo in the years after their publication. If Cohen's work on Ladino books or the previous searches for Genizah incunabula are anything to go by, then it is also likely that this type of survey would discover unknown editions of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Hebrew-script texts printed in Italy, Salonika, and Constantinople, among other sites. It may even provide new evidence for the history of European book culture and its relationship with the Middle East.

⁹¹ See Reif, *A Jewish Archive*, 15; Jefferson, 'Deconstructing "the Cairo Genizah"', 442–44; Posegay, 'Searching for the Last Genizah Fragment', 427–428.

⁹² Including printed material in the Jewish Theological Seminary's ENA collection, which the present study has not examined.

⁹³ Reading *רפב* on the verso (line 11), although this is uncertain.

⁹⁴ The earliest known edition of this work was published in a single volume with Moses Ventura's *Yemin Moshe* (Amsterdam, 1718); Gottard Deutsch et al., 'Najara', in *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, ed. Isidore Singer (New York; London: Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1906), 150–51. Najara died around 1625.

Classmark abbreviations

T-S = Taylor-Schechter Collection, Cambridge University Library

Moss. = Mosseri Collection, on loan at the Cambridge University Library

Yevr.-Arab. = Judaeo-Arabic collection, Russian National Library, St. Petersburg

AIU = Alliance Israélite Universelle, Paris

Rylands GPS = Gaster Printed Series, John Rylands Library, Manchester

ENA = Elkan Nathan Adler Collection, Jewish Theological Seminary of America, New York

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THIS TORAH, A SIGN OF GOOD THINGS TO COME: TRADITION, RELIGION, AND POLITICS IN THE COLOPHONS OF TWO TENTH-CENTURY SIBLING SCRIBES

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INTRODUCTION

In early tenth-century Tiberias, two Jewish brothers – both trained in the elite scribal tradition known as the Masorah – collaborated to produce an ornate, customized codex of the Pentateuch to be presented as a gift for another pair of brothers from their religious community.¹ Shlomo ben Buya‘ah was the main scribe, providing the consonantal Hebrew text of this special Torah with large, beautiful calligraphy in a carefully planned layout.² His brother Ephrayim completed the work by adding all the traditionally required vocalizations and accentuations, as well as hundreds of marginal notes and several micrographic decorations. To dedicate their finished tome, each added a short, personal composition woven from threads of Scripture, scribal-convention, and ideology. These colophons provide a small window into their world. And if we attend to these brothers’ political situation – namely, Jewish life in the shadow of Muslim rule in the Holy Land – their bold expressions of a hope for intergenerational blessing, salvation, the coming of

¹ The occasion of this gift is unknown, both colophons name the recipients as “Rav Avraham and Rav Tzalich, sons of our Rabbi Maimun.” For an excellent and accessible overview of the Masoretic tradition, see Khan, Geoffrey, *A Short Introduction to the Tiberian Masoretic Bible and Its Reading Tradition*, Piscataway: Gorgias Press, 2014.

² Shlomo ben Buya‘ah was also the scribe of the famous Aleppo Codex, a contemporary Tiberian manuscript which had originally contained the entire Tanakh but was greatly damaged in anti-Jewish riots in 1947. For a popular and well received account of the incredible history of this artifact, see Friedman, Matti, *The Aleppo Codex*, Chapel Hill: Algonquin Books, 2013.

the Messiah, and the rebuilding of Jerusalem indicate to us how colophons can function as markers of religious identity, community solidarity, and perhaps even subtle inter-religious polemic, especially when accompanying a manuscript of sacred text such as the Law of Moses.

What follows is a translation and close reading of these two colophons with an eye toward three interconnected aims. First, to expand the discussion of colophons within Masoretic Studies beyond that of identifying scribes and dating manuscripts into the broader comparative world, with the possibility of sketching individual scribes' ideological profiles in their historical contexts. It is especially appealing to approach these colophons as a means of peeking into the lives of Tiberian Masoretes since Jewish scribes in general did not write autobiographies; the work of transmitting the massive tradition was their primary focus and devotion.³ Second, to offer scholars of colophons from other traditions a glimpse into the medieval "masoretic" world from which today's religious and text-critical print editions of the Hebrew Bible are traced. Third, to compare these two brothers' colophons with one another and to address the tension between ideological claims repeated within them on one hand and the reality of Islamic power in both Tiberias and Jerusalem on the other. In all, my goal is to provide a nuanced appreciation for the Buya'ah's project in its particular time and place, viewed through the lens of the colophons they wrote upon its completion and dedication.

After a brief description of the codex itself, I will present translations of each colophon. Next, a series of comparisons and contrasts between them will help us sift those features which were shared and expected from those which likely reflect individual personality. Finally, observations concerning their visual display and speculation about the potential political subtext of their content will wrap up the study.

THE FIRST LENINGRAD BIBLE

The codex of the Torah created by Shlomo and Ephrayim Buya'ah is housed in the Russian National Library, as part of the Firkovitch collection.⁴ The illuminated temple-themed carpet pages preceding the text of Genesis bespeak affluence and luxury. In the field of Masoretic Studies, this beautiful, yet sadly highly damaged

³ Colophon research within Masoretic Studies usually pivots around three concerns. One, whether it is original; two, whether it is pseudepigraphic; and three, whether it is helpful in dating the manuscript. Ben-Zvi, Yizhak, "The Codex of Ben Asher," *Textus* 1 (1960), pp. 1–40, and Yeivin, Israel, *Introduction to the Tiberian Masorah*, transl. E. J. Revell, Missoula: Scholars Press, 1980, pp. 9–20. For an example of a colophon whose authenticity has been discredited see Ofer, Yosef, "Cairo Codex," *Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception* 4, Berlin/Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2012, p. 770.

⁴ The Russian National Library call number is Ms EVR II B 17, with the colophons are found on ff. 232v–233r, and 234v.

Bible manuscript is called “L¹,” shorthand for Leningradensis 1.⁵ According to the second colophon – that of Ephrayim – its date of completion is calculated to 930 CE. Narkiss provides the following specifications for the artifact: 241 vellum leaves, 18.5x15.75 in.⁶ Apart from the special layouts for the Song of the Sea (Exodus 15) and the Song of Moses (Deuteronomy 32), each page consists of three columns of text, twenty lines each.

Some initial comments will provide a proper orientation to the colophons’ placement within the overall physical object. In its original form, this codex contained the Five Books of Moses: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Lost are the beginning chapters of Genesis, along with some additional inner pages, but the last pages of the codex are preserved and the colophons are among them. For the moment, imagine the large book laying open before you, with a nearly 32-inch span; the last words of Deuteronomy filling both pages, coming to an end at the lower left. Turning to the next page you find a full, two-page spread, with ten carefully spaced lines on each. Here, the size of the individual letters is larger than the those used in the Torah itself. This first colophon is that of the main scribe Shlomo ben Buya’ah, and consists of 113 words. The second colophon of 102 words is found a few pages later in a single column of tiny script, in the middle of the page. Immediately above and below the column are short verses from Isaiah, each written in the shape of diamond; this is the colophon of Shlomo’s brother Ephrayim. It takes up roughly one-twentieth the amount of space of Shlomo’s, even though their word count is quite close.

TRANSLATIONS

Colophon 1: Shlomo ben Buya’ah, the Main Scribe

I, Shlomo Halevi *bar* Buya’ah, disciple of Sa’id *bar* Farjoi, known as Alquq, wrote this book of the Torah of Moses, ***according to the good hand of my God upon me*** (Neh. 2:8) *for our Rav Barhun, and for our Rav Tzalich, the sons of our Rav Maimun.*⁷

⁵ For descriptions of this manuscript, see Yeivin, *Tiberian Masorah*, pp. 22–23, and Bezalel Narkiss, *Hebrew Illuminated Manuscripts*, Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1969, p. 42.

⁶ Narkiss, *Illuminated Manuscripts*, p. 42. Although Narkiss suggests Egypt, I presume Tiberias to be the place where L¹ was produced, following the discussion in Yosef Ofer, *The Masora on Scripture and its Methods*, Berlin/Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2019, pp. 134–135.

⁷ Bible passage translations are modified from the *New American Standard Bible*, The Lockman Foundation, 1995. The changes in font and style do not reflect the actual visual presentation of the colophons but highlight for the English reader the rich variety of the traditional and creative threads woven tightly together in each composition. The primary language of each colophon is Hebrew, given in regular font. For this presentation, *Aramaic words are distinguished with italic*, ***Scripture citations with bold italic***, and scribal conventions with regular underlined font. References to chapters and verses are not original but are added as

May it be upon them a sign of good, and may the Scripture be fulfilled upon them, as it is written, **May YHWH, the God of your fathers, increase you a thousand-fold more than you are and bless you, just as He has promised you (Dt. 1:11).**

And may the Scripture be fulfilled upon them, as it is written, **“As for Me, this is My covenant with them,” says YHWH: “My Spirit which is upon you, and My words which I have put in your mouth shall not depart from your mouth, from the mouth of your seed, nor from the mouth of your seed’s seed,” says YHWH, “from now and forever” (Is. 59:21).**

And may the Scripture be fulfilled upon them, as it is written, **In place of your fathers will be your sons; You shall make them princes in all the earth (Ps. 45:16).**

And may it be a sign of good, a sign of blessing and salvation, a sign of consolation, sustenance, and provision, a sign of the coming of the Messiah and for the building of Jerusalem.

Indeed, may you see your children’s children. Peace be upon Israel (Ps. 128:6)! Amen.

Colophon 2: Ephrayim ben Buya‘ah, the Finishing Scribe

Israel has been saved by YHWH with an everlasting salvation; You will not be put to shame or humiliated to all eternity (Isa 45:17).

I, Ephraim ben Rabbi Buya‘ah, have pointed and provided with a Masorah and perfected this Torah and examined it **according to the good hand of my God upon me (Neh. 2:8)**; and if there be any unintentional error in it, let it not be accounted to me a sin by YWY. I completed (it) on day six [“Friday”] the eighth day of Kislev in the year one-thousand two-hundred and forty-one according to the counting of the documents [i.e. the Seleucid era] for our Rav Abraham and for our Rav Tzalach the sons of our Rav Maimun.

May this Torah be for them and for us and for all Israel a sign of good, a sign of blessing, for redemption and for salvation for the coming of the Messiah and for the building of Jerusalem and for gathering the exiles of Israel, just as our Creator gathered us.

YWY builds Jerusalem, He gathers the outcasts of Israel (Ps 147:2). And He will lift up a standard for the nations and assemble the banished ones of Israel, and will gather the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth (Is 11:12).

COMMENTARY

Both colophons are written in a consistent and uniform Hebrew block script, with Hebrew as the primary language and Aramaic the secondary. There is repeated use of a word of Greek origin (*siman*, “sign”) as well as some Arabic names, such as *Sa'id*, *Farjoi*, and *Alquq*, all of which are transliterated into Hebrew characters. The degree of the brothers’ language consciousness cannot be determined, but I suggest that they were deliberate when switching between Hebrew and Aramaic. Within the larger masoretic tradition, Aramaic is the primary “frame” language while Hebrew is generally reserved for Scriptural citation. The presence of Greek is not surprising, as there are numerous such words which had been absorbed into Aramaic in late antiquity. Arabic reflects the circumstance of Jewish life in Tiberius under Abbasid control. That the Arabic names of prominent religious Jews were recorded for preservation in this specially crafted Torah manuscript indicates a measure of openness to and fluidity within a larger non-Jewish culture. There is no indication in these colophons of an ideological resistance to or purposeful avoidance of the use of Arabic within this religious community; it seems to have been an accepted, unremarkable aspect of life.

USE OF SCRIPTURE

Quotations from the Hebrew Bible are a major feature of the colophons. This is logical, since the masoretic scribes lived to ensure the survival of their sacred written tradition. Both brothers draw from Isaiah and the Psalms, but they do not cite the same passages. Shlomo quotes Deuteronomy, but Ephrayim does not refer to any of the Books of Moses. The one verse they do have in common, however, is Nehemiah 2:8. In its original context, the phrase “according to the good hand of my God upon me” marked Nehemiah’s happy success in his efforts to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem. Additionally, the exemplary ancient Jewish scribe Ezra is associated with Nehemiah and the Jews’ return from an exile under foreign dominion. Why would our two scribes cite the same verse? Nehemiah’s words certainly held a special place for them and serve as a point of brotherly unity. As I intend to show below, the Buya’ahs clearly believed that their success in making this Pentateuch was a positive step toward redemption. Their shared expression of the phrase from Nehemiah fits well with their highest national hopes; they saw themselves in a predicament not too different from that of the prophet of old and were sure that their God was guiding them.

Shlomo’s four remaining verses indicate a concern for continuity of family and covenant faithfulness across generations. Indeed, this is a main feature of his personal dedication to “the sons of Maimun.” Deuteronomy 1:11 emphasizes God’s blessing and increase for the people of Israel, “May YHWH, the God of your fathers, increase you a thousand-fold more than you are and bless you...” The promise of God’s words being “in the mouth” of each new generation is found in Isaiah 59:21, “...My words which I have put in your mouth shall not depart from your mouth, from the mouth of your seed, nor from the mouth of your seed’s seed, etc....” The

two Psalm quotations at the end of the colophon complement the theme of strong family solidarity with a bright future hope. “In place of your fathers will be your sons; You shall make them princes in all the earth,” (Ps. 45:16) and “Indeed, may you see your children’s children” (Ps. 128:6). Shlomo’s artful labor in producing this manuscript, with the Scripture citations he selected for his colophon, demonstrate the extremely high value he placed upon the careful transmission of the Torah of Moses to the next generation and beyond. Undergirding the patience and skill he demonstrated in becoming an accomplished scribe was a confidence in the enduring validity of these prophetic promises and a drive to create elegant copies of Scripture.

Ephrayim’s use of Scripture has a style unique from that of his brother. This colophon is framed by an *inclusio*, both literally and visually. The beginning and end feature verses from the prophet Isaiah, each written in the shape of a diamond. There is no mention of fathers or sons or seed, as in Shlomo’s. Rather, these selections focus on YHWH’s promises to regather the people of Israel. We might understand Ephrayim’s opening verse, “Israel has been saved by YHWH... will not be put to shame or humiliated...” as a reminder for Jews to not give up hope, despite the persistent presence of Islamic hegemony in the Holy Land. After all, a foreign nation has not decreed the long Exile, but Israel’s God. The verse from Psalm 147 says explicitly that He is the one who “builds Jerusalem.” Both Isaiah passages and the quote from Psalms explicitly mention Israel by name. Shlomo only mentions Israel once, but Ephrayim mentions Israel five times. Not only was this Torah codex custom made for a certain family of rabbis for the purpose of study and passing it down through the generations, but its completion also marked an accomplishment for the Jewish people more broadly. The Scripture verses selected for the two colophons are an example of how scribes could focus and repackage Israel’s rich literary heritage for a special purpose, which in the minds of the Buya’ah brothers encompassed both familial and national aspects.

SCRIBAL CONVENTION

In terms of overall composition, both scribes introduce themselves by name, as sons of their father, according to the ancient custom. Each indicates the nature of their contribution and the names of the recipients of the gift.

There are several instances where phrases in the colophons follow a standard form. These constructions are often repeated and come from a larger repertoire in oral and written communication. The formulaic construction “May it be a sign of...” is found in both colophons and is followed by lists of desirable conditions for Israel’s well-being. Some items are common to both scribes, but all are drawn subjectively from a larger pool of standardly conceived “good” omens.

Colophon “Signs” List

<u>Shlomo</u>	<u>Shared</u>	<u>Ephrayim</u>
(2x)	good blessing	
	salvation	redemption
consolation sustenance provision	coming Messiah building Jerusalem	regathering Exiles

Shlomo’s dedication includes stock phrases for introducing a scriptural promise and a hope for its realization, “May the Scripture be fulfilled for them...” and “as it is written.” Not only does he repeat these standard formulas, but he employs a “short-hand” for compressing the predictable Hebrew phrases to a reduced number of letters. Without knowledge of this common scribal convention, a reader would not know this is an abbreviation. As noted above, the three verses introduced this way indicate a very present expectation that Israel’s families are ensured a special blessing and protection from YHWH. Shlomo’s colophon ends with the traditional community liturgical response “Amen,” which though not found in his brother’s is yet another stylistic convention.

Only in Ephrayim’s colophon do we find the date of completion, given “according to the counting of documents.” This is a reckoning of time which corresponds to the Seleucid era, and is found in Jewish sources as far back as the time of the Maccabees.⁸ There is an additional scribal convention which distinguishes Ephrayim’s colophon from Shlomo’s, namely the writing of the Tetragrammaton. The sacred name of the God of Israel appears three times in Shlomo’s colophon, each within a cited Scripture, and each time written in full (transliterated herein as YHWH). The Tetragrammaton appears three times also in Ephrayim’s colophon, but only once written in full, in his opening citation of Isaiah 45:17. In the remaining two, he employed the common scribal circumlocution YWY. One of these is in the citation of Psalm 47, and the other in his pious statement concerning potential mistakes, “...if there be any unintentional error in it, let it not be accounted to me a sin by YWY.” Given that Ephrayim was the actual masorete for this manuscript, it is likely that his careful treatment of the divine name reflects a higher intensity of devotion to masoretic tradition than that of his brother.

⁸ 2 Maccabees 1:7, in the epistle to Jews in Egypt concerning the Feast of Dedication (Hanukkah). Strootman, Rolf, “Seleucid Era,” *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, online edition, 2015, available at <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/seleucid-era> (accessed on 26 April, 2022). Additionally, British Library Ms Or. 4445, f.186r.

Although there are plenty of scribal conventions employed in these colophons, and several citations of Scripture, there is no citation of any rabbinic or extra-canonical text. Was this due to general cultural expectations as to what constitutes a proper colophon? Were the brothers constrained by a standard colophon template? It is most likely that they were simply abiding by a customary formula for such a dedication, and all the elements we find here would be found in other contemporary Jewish colophons.

SIGNIFICANT CONTRASTS AND PERSONAL TOUCH

Although these two colophons share several expected elements, such as self-identification, dedication, selections from Scripture, scribal conventions, and are comprised of roughly the same number of words (Shlomo, 113; Ephrayim, 102), there are significant differences between them. Presuming that these two brothers received nearly identical upbringing and training, a careful comparison of their compositions provides as good a window a historian could wish for when it comes to sketching personal profiles of tenth-century Jewish scribes. While bound to the overall expectations of what a colophon should be and do, the creativity each scribe expresses within these limitations sets them apart one from the other in remarkable ways. Meeting the cultural obligations is only the beginning; these constraints serve as a springboard for the expression of personal flair.

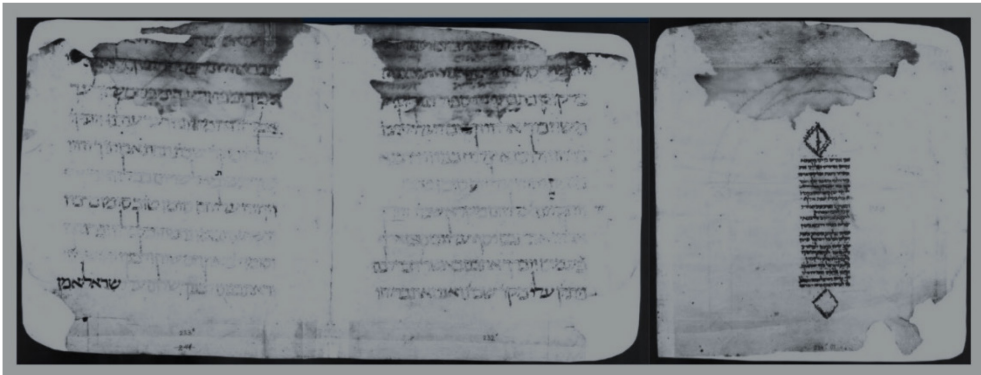


Figure 1: The Buya'ah Brothers' Colophons; Shlomo on left (f232v–233r), Ephrayim on right (f234v).

As noted earlier, the visual display of the two colophons could not be more different (See Figure 1). Shlomo planned his colophon to be spread uniformly over two full pages of the codex. The ten instances in which he employed abbreviated forms allowed for more overall text than would fit had he written everything out. He used large, bold, and beautiful Hebrew script. His elegant hand exudes confidence and authority, and the presentation relies on no decorative features. The reader is impressed with a sense of Shlomo's artistry, precision, and power.

Ephrayim's colophon, on the other hand, looks almost puny when viewed next to his brother's. His writing is likewise carefully planned, but tiny and perhaps a bit sloppily executed. The micrographic candle-like design is symmetrical and deliber-

ate but takes up only a fraction of a single page, as if he wanted to make it as small as possible. In this regard, the sense of the relative size of Ephrayim's colophon matches well his expression of humility, something not found in Shlomo's: "...and if there be any unintentional error in it, let it not be accounted to me a sin by YWY." But is such sentiment merely a conventional trope of a scribe's self-negation? Or does such a statement reflect genuine religious piety and acknowledgement of personal fallibility? This question will be complicated by a literary comparison of the two colophons.

As we can see, Shlomo's colophon is visually stunning and bold while his brother's small and crunched. However, when key literary differences are taken into account, Ephrayim's pride is not lacking and Shlomo not without humility. First, I will contrast how they introduce themselves and then their respective accounts of division of labor. Shlomo begins, "I, Shlomo Halevi *bar* Buya'ah..." We quickly learn that he was recognized as a Levite, the family which according to the Torah served in the Temple and carried the burden of instructing Israel in God's Holy Law. Additionally, Shlomo is not only a son (Aramaic: *bar*) of his father, but also a disciple (Hebrew: *talmid*) of one Sa'id *bar* Farjoi. He thus honors his teacher in addition to his biological father. By referring to himself as a disciple, Shlomo locates himself within a specific tradition of learning which is constrained by discipline and submission to an authoritative teacher. Ephrayim claims no tribal affiliation (although it is safe to assume his is the same as his brother's) and mentions no educational pedigree. Rather, he simply writes, "Ephraim ben Rabbi Buya'ah..." employing the Hebrew *ben* instead of *bar*, and includes the title "Rabbi" for his father, something Shlomo did not do.

A sharper contrast in literary expression is evident when comparing each scribe's description of the kinds of labor they contributed to the production of this codex. We are not told anything about the acquisition or preparation of the leather, nor who was responsible for cutting and binding the quires or preparing the ink and quills. But the scribes leave their mark and tell us what they did. For Shlomo, a single verb captures his work: *katavti*, *I wrote* this Torah of Moses. Of course, this verb refers to his physical labor as a copyist of the entirety of the ancient text, not the compositional sense. Ephrayim's account is much more detailed, consisting of five verbs in three phrases. The first phrase, "I pointed and notated and perfected this Torah..." refers to his addition of vocalization, select masorah notes, and other proper traditional features pertaining to the reading tradition. In the second phrase he writes, "I examined it," which means that he checked over all his work to ensure accuracy. With the third phrase, "I completed it," he indicates the date upon which the project was finished. But with all Ephrayim's work, we must not let Shlomo's single verb conceal the magnitude of his contribution, namely the placement on parchment of roughly 304,800 letters, each one with the most elegant calligraphy. Ephrayim's intricate pen work is around the edges and in the margins of the consonantal text provided by his brother, and in total is comprised of far less words. However, the number of accent marks and vowel points, apart from hundreds of details of masorah he included, far exceeds the number of Hebrew letters written

by Shlomo. Ephrayim's task demands an intense attention to detail, drawing upon a mastery of a much broader body of tradition than that demanded of his brother. In fact, he is probably the scribe who noticed and supplied the missing letter in Shlomo's quote from the Psalms, "and You shall appoint them..." A tiny letter *tav*, written above the line and between the letters where it belongs, could very well be from Ephrayim's hand. And when we include the decorations and micrographic design work, such as at the Song of the Sea and the Song of Moses, the requisite variance in letter size and comprehensive knowledge of the entire Hebrew Bible, Ephrayim ben Buya'ah stands out as a mighty Jewish intellectual power whose contribution surpassed that of his brother.

HISTORICAL SITUATION AND RELIGIOUS IDEOLOGY

In the tenth century, Tiberias was a commercial hub for Jews and had become "the most important Jewish city in Palestine and also in the Diaspora, surpassing even the holy city of Jerusalem."⁹ Might there have been any local religious architecture that had an impact on the Jewish communities residing or visiting there? An area of growing scholarship is the city's Islamization beginning with the Umayyads in the seventh century. We have tenth century accounts in Arabic of travelers who describe the city and its central congregational mosque. Katia Cytryn-Silverman of Hebrew University has written extensively on excavations of an Umayyad era mosque at the base of Mt. Bernice, adjacent to the main marketplace. She has shown how its floor plan matches that of the Great Mosque of Damascus, another grand building project of the Umayyads.¹⁰

While the Friday Mosque of Tiberias was destroyed along with any inscriptions it might have had, we can look to another significant Umayyad building in the Holy Land from that same period, the Dome of the Rock. To this day, within the inner octagonal of the dome are its original seventh century Arabic inscriptions of blessings and quotations of the Koran, surrounded by all manner of intricate floral and geometric artistry.¹¹

If such Umayyad inscriptional design were to be found in the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem, as it was in the Great Mosque of Damascus, is it a stretch to suggest that the mosque of Tiberias, on the trade route between these two main cities, would have similar displays of Koranic verse in ornate design? Did the

⁹ Ofer, Yosef, "The History and Authority of the Aleppo Codex," in M. Glatzer, ed., *Jerusalem Crown – The Bible of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem: Companion Volume*, Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 2001, p. 26.

¹⁰ Cytryn-Silverman, Katia, "The Umayyad Mosque of Tiberias," *Muqarnas* 26 (2009), pp. 37–61.

¹¹ Grabar, Oleg, *The Shape of the Holy: Early Islamic Jerusalem*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996; Milwright, Marcus, *The Dome of the Rock and its Umayyad Mosaic Inscriptions*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016.

mosque of Tiberias impose upon, inspire, or even offend the Buya'ah brothers' Jewish sensibilities? Were Jews occasionally, or even daily, confronted with large, decorative calligraphic inscriptions of passages from the Koran? Were they impressed by Islamic book art? Had the brothers ever visited the Temple Mount and beheld these inscriptions in the Dome of the Rock? While we cannot know what Islamic book or architectural art they were exposed to in their lifetime, it would be unreasonable to suggest that they saw none or that it had no impact on them at all.

What is now known as the First Leningrad Bible was produced by skilled Jewish scribes who labored to affirm and present their ancient tradition afresh, in contemporary media with contemporary design. Jewish scribes had long privileged scroll over codex and were resistant to any markings other than the consonantal text of Scripture. Micrography and other decorations for beautifying a Torah of Moses would have been unheard of. But under Muslim rule, things changed as far as the Buya'ah family was concerned. For them, survival meant the navigation of the complex world in which they found themselves. Shlomo had developed a refined calligraphic hand and Ephrayim an enjoyment of writing Hebrew in a variety of geometric shapes.

While the bulk of their composite work is in Hebrew and Aramaic, the presence of Greek and Arabic in the colophons reveals small but necessary ties to this larger Islamic society. But there is a subversive side to the brothers' dedications, nestled inside their prayer that this completed Torah be a "sign" for many good things to come. In particular, the realities anticipated in both colophons as "signs" reflect unsettled hearts with respect to the present state of affairs; they were looking for "blessing ... salvation ... the coming of the Messiah ... and the rebuilding of Jerusalem." Implied in these shared hopes is a conviction that Islamic hegemony and any resultant Jewish suffering were only temporary; things would soon change, and the Jews would be back in their rightful place. If they had indeed beheld the Dome of the Rock upon visiting Jerusalem, these colophons show us that the Buya'ahs were not impressed; they were envisioning something very different at the Temple Mount. That Ephrayim adds "and for the regathering of Exiles" reveals a sad awareness of Jewish diaspora and longing for an ultimate national restoration. Still, the selection for the head of his colophon from Isaiah suggests that he did not envision the Jews engaging in a violent revolt; on the contrary, Ephrayim believed that their God would soon act on their behalf, and turn events to favor His covenant people Israel.

The last item to address in this regard is Ephrayim's method of dating the completion to the Seleucid era. As we have seen, this is consistent with a long-standing convention in Jewish dating. But it also conveniently simultaneously denies legitimacy to any Islamic method of time keeping. Is it possible that the clever scribe was able to both stay within the bounds of tradition while also refusing to acknowledge any permanency to Muslim power? If all we had were these colophons, we would know nothing about governance in Palestine except that the Jews were not "yet" regathered, the Messiah had not "yet" come, and Jerusalem had not "yet" been rebuilt. But in the case of the Buya'ah family scribes, hope was both

alive and productive. While Shlomo's colophon emphasizes present family blessedness and offers no time clues whatsoever, Ephrayim's choice for a twelve-hundred-year Muslim-less time stamp can be read as a dramatization of the long, weary centuries of diaspora for which an end was in sight.

CONCLUSION

The Buya'ah brothers' colophons in this ornate Pentateuch are works of visual and literary art which can be read within at least three fruitful interpretive horizons. First, they help historians identify the time and location of the manuscript's production, as well as the names of the scribes responsible and how they divided their labor. The dedications establish that the purpose behind the manufacture of this artifact was private and personal rather than commercial and profit oriented. Both colophons carry a tone of genuine spiritual motivation and concern. Second, the conventional and formal elements within the compositions can be differentiated from moments of individualized expression, thereby exposing lines of contour helpful for approximating a profile sketch for each brother. Viewed in juxtaposition with one another, the colophons reveal additional variances which distinguish the brothers in domains of expertise, religious hope, and commitment to tradition. Though they shared an inordinate amount of culture, they were clearly two very unique individuals. Third, soundings from the larger historical circumstance of the Buya'ah's project provide a plausibility structure in which negotiations with powerful, non-Jewish culture and even subtle inter-religious polemic can be reasonably posited. This highly educated scribal family in tenth-century Tiberias did not live in complete isolation from their Muslim neighbors and rulers. Adoption of the codex form, the beautification of their Scripture through calligraphy and decorative design, and the soft presence in the colophons of Arabic names suggests a measure of openness to the latest and best technologies available and a degree of comfort with the most recent language of empire.¹² Yet, the final product is distinctly and unashamedly Jewish, with the doubly encoded confidence that the hand of their God was upon them both (Neh. 2:8), and that this Torah would be a sign of the best things to come for the people of Israel.

¹² We must guard from the presumption that the Tiberian Masoretes' response to Muslim (or Christian, for that matter) art and book culture was uniform or united; scribes such as Aharon ben Asher were much more conservative than the Buya'ah brothers when it came to what a proper "Masoretic" codex should be. The extravagant beautification of 10th-century Jewish Bible codices such as L¹ must be carefully differentiated from the stark ascetic visual display of the Aleppo Codex. Such is the argument of a paper this author presented for the Israeli Association for the Study of Religions at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, April 2019: Vanhoff, Robert, "Keeping Scripture Holy: A 10th-century Masorete Negotiates the Sanctity of the Written Word," video recording with response by Guy Stroumsa available online at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iXesUcz3x_U&t=5s

EARLY CHRISTIAN ARABIC COLOPHONS FROM THE PALESTINIAN MONASTERIES: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

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The present study offers a comparative analysis of colophons written in Arabic by Christian scribes at the monasteries of Saint Chariton, Saint Sabas, and Saint Catherine in the ninth and tenth centuries CE. These monasteries have played a crucial role in the formation of the early Christian Arabic manuscript tradition. The colophons of these manuscripts provide the most immediate access to the socio-cultural milieu of their producers. The present study is based on a selection of 20 colophons, which are explicitly connected to one of the three monasteries. Our main aim is to draft a typology of early Christian Arabic colophons as a means to investigate the various issues surrounding emergent Christian Arabic scribality. Additionally, we will discuss paleographical features of the handwriting of the scribes who authored the colophons discussed here. As we will show, these can be used to connect anonymous colophons and manuscripts without colophons, at least with some probability, to the workshops of these monasteries. Overall, our aim is to highlight the microhistorical significance of early Christian Arabic colophons, which not only offer spatio-temporal, prosopographical, social, intellectual, and, to some extent, economic coordinates for the contextualisation of early Christian Arabic manuscript production, but also allow us to catch a glimpse of early Christian Arabic scribal self-perception.

1 INTRODUCTION¹

The present study offers a comparative analysis of colophons written in Arabic by Christian scribes at the monasteries of Saint Chariton, Saint Sabas, and Saint Catherine in the ninth and tenth centuries CE. These Palestinian monasteries have played a crucial role in the birth and formation of a Christian Arabic literary legacy and manuscript tradition.² They were important nodes in a scribal network that stretched from Egypt to Northern Mesopotamia, from the deserts to the urban centers.³ Arguably following a Byzantine trend, Christian Arabic scribes started to leave dates in manuscripts from the second half of the ninth century CE onwards.⁴ They may also mention places of production as well as personal information about themselves or the recipients of the manuscripts, which is already observable in earlier undated colophons. Together with other types of paratextual documentary evidence, they provide the most immediate access to the socio-cultural milieu of the early tradents of Christian Arabic literature. The earliest surviving witnesses of this literature reflect intellectual needs and social practices that document scribal activity. The main aim of this study, therefore, is to draft a typology of early Christian Arabic colophons as a means to investigate the various issues surrounding emergent Christian Arabic scribality.⁵

The early, i.e. pre-1000 CE, Christian Arabic colophon corpus comprises ca. 40 colophons. The present study is based on a selection of 20 colophons, which are explicitly connected to one of the three Palestinian monasteries. At a later point, we plan to address in detail all known early Christian Arabic colophons, but already at this stage, the material studied here will be discussed in light of this broader corpus, when relevant. We tentatively estimate that $\leq 10\%$ of the pre-1000

¹ This study has greatly benefitted from our exchanges with Vevian Zaki and Alexander Treiger. We would also like to express our gratitude to Father Justin of Saint Catherine's Monastery who helped us gain access to material otherwise inaccessible. We would like to thank Sophia Dege-Müller, Feras Krimsti, Ramez Mikhail, Bereket Okubatsion, and Lev Weitz for helping us clarify certain questions and for suggesting literature. This paper was partly composed with the support of the Swedish Research Council (2017–01630).

² The Sinai region was known as "Palaestina Tertia" or "Palaestina Salutaris" in late antiquity, which is why we refer to Saint Catherine's Monastery as a "Palestinian" monastery as well. The material presented here amply evinces the strong ties between the Sinai and the Judean Desert monasteries.

³ For studies of such networks, see Griffith, "Anthony David"; Schachner, "Book Production"; Rapp, "From the Holy City."

⁴ Cf. Treu, "Schreibernotizen," p. 314; Nongbri, *God's Library*, p. 47; Bausi et al. (eds), *Comparative Oriental Manuscript Studies*, p. 205. For the Arabic tradition, see Binggeli, "Early Christian Graeco-Arabica."

⁵ We have highlighted the need for thoroughgoing studies of Christian Arabic scribality in an earlier publication; see Gibson, et al, "Biblia Arabica," pp. 70–72. See also Samir, "La tradition arabe chrétienne," pp. 46–47.

CE Christian Arabic manuscript corpus preserves a colophon (which again roughly matches the numbers of Greek Byzantine manuscripts).⁶ For our study, we have singled out six colophons from five manuscripts produced at the Monastery of Saint Chariton, six colophons from five manuscripts produced at the Monastery at Saint Saba, and eight colophons found in six manuscripts produced at Saint Catherine's Monastery. Some of these colophons have already been published, translated, and discussed in previous research. What is lacking, however, is a study that looks at this material comparatively, identifying and categorizing the vocabulary of early Christian Arabic colophons, their stylistic conventions, as well as the type of factoids they contain.⁷ One of the advantages of a comparative approach is that it allows us to analyze this material statistically. Most importantly, however, it brings to the fore the microhistorical significance of colophons, which offer the spatio-temporal and prosopographical coordinates for the contextualisation of early Christian Arabic manuscript production. To some extent, a comparative study also provides us with clues, albeit suggestive in nature, as to the historical and scribal context of manuscripts that lack paratextual information concerning their production. In many cases, viewing a significant number of colophons together also allows us to understand and reconstruct parts of colophons that are lost due to damage or hard to decipher.

For our study, we have revisited the texts of the colophons either *de visu* or by means of digital reproductions. In one case (SANF Parch. 3),⁸ we had to rely entirely on transcriptions, mainly because of the manuscript's fragile state of preservation.⁹ Today the manuscripts from which we have taken our source material are

⁶ Treu, "Schreibernotizen", p. 310. For Christian Arabic manuscripts there is no reliable quantitative data. André Binggeli estimated the number of shelfmarks of Christian Arabic parchment manuscripts to ca. 200; cf. Binggeli, "Early Christian Graeco-Arabica," p. 231. This number has to be adjusted for two reasons. First, we have to take into account that sometimes up to seven shelfmarks designate *membra disiecta* of one and the same original codex. Second, from 920 CE onwards paper becomes increasingly used as writing support; cf. Hjälm, "Paleographical Study," pp. 76–77. Against this background, we tentatively estimate that the corpus of pre-1000 CE Christian Arabic manuscripts amounts to ca. 300–400 codicological units.

⁷ A pioneering study was published by Gérard Troupeau in 1997. Troupeau based his typology of Christian Arabic manuscripts on 215 manuscripts from the collection of the Bibliothèque nationale de France in Paris. This corpus, however, contained only one 10th-century CE manuscript. See Troupeau, "Les colophons."

⁸ For a key to the abbreviations of shelfmarks we use here, see the Appendix.

⁹ It is noteworthy that such a comparatively large number of colophons has survived more than one thousand years of vicissitudes. Colophons are typically found at a place in the manuscripts, which is liable to get detached from the binding due to the disintegration of the binding material. Such loose folios were kept with their mother codices or kept in others; sometimes they were themselves used to reinforce the binding. Especially in the 19th century, an extreme dispersion of *membra disiecta* of Christian Arabic (and other Eastern Christian)

housed at a number of different institutions. More than half of them belong to the collection of Saint Catherine's Monastery at Mount Sinai. Another five originally belonged to this collection as well. There is only one manuscript in our corpus (BL Or. 4950), for which not enough information on provenance could be obtained so as to determine if it came to Europe via Sinai or some other place. This strong tie to Sinai confirms André Binggeli's assessment that "we are seeing the early Christian Arabic manuscript production, prior to the 11th century, through a particular prism," namely the "network of cultural relations that the monastery of Mount Sinai had built in the Middle East during this period."¹⁰ This also means that all manuscripts included in this study are, to the best of our knowledge, the product of Arabized Orthodox Christians, who were in formal communion with Constantinople and are traditionally called "Melkites" (today this designation refers to Roman Catholic Christians following the Byzantine rite, which is why it is commonly substituted by the designation "Rūm-Orthodox"). The Melkite or Rūm-Orthodox community was among the first Christian groups to adopt Arabic for its religious affairs on a larger scale, a fact that is clearly mirrored in the manuscripts it produced.¹¹ The Greek and Syriac cultural and linguistic backgrounds of this community shine through also in the conventions and language of the manuscripts discussed here. Hence, even though the material analyzed here is representative of only a small fraction of the Christian Arabic manuscript tradition as a whole, it is also characteristic of it in the sense that it is clearly embedded in a wider Eastern Christian context.

2 ANALYZING COLOPHONS: SOME METHODOLOGICAL PRELIMINARIES

Definitions of the term "colophon" are not uncontested. As indicated above, we proceed here from a definition that understands colophons as paratextual units of manuscripts, authored by a person involved in the copying of those manuscripts (typically the scribe), providing at least one – but ideally more than one – unit of factual information (factoid), i.e. personal names of those involved in the produc-

manuscripts took place. Cf. e.g. the remarks in Gibson, *Catalogue of the Arabic Mss.*, p. viii: "Most of the books had not only lost their title-pages, but their last leaves as well, so that it was not possible to find their dates. One is ashamed to think that some scholar in former years must have abused the hospitality of the monks, and that a choice collection of title-pages may be found in some European library."

¹⁰ Binggeli, "Early Christian Graeco-Arabica," p. 231.

¹¹ Besides Rūm-Orthodox Christians, East Syriac communities seem to be connected to the early corpus of Arabic Bible translations; cf. Vollandt, *Arabic Versions of the Pentateuch*, p. 67. See there also his observations that non-literal translation techniques, such as alternate renderings, may be connected to the East Syriac communities. For an overview of such features in the early corpus, see Hjälms, *Christian Arabic Versions of Daniel*, pp. 377–398. For possible East Syriac influence on early Arabic Bible translations, see also Brock, "A Neglected Witness."

tion of the manuscripts, as well as the place or date of its production.¹² It is exactly this sort of information, which makes colophons important documentary sources. At least when it comes to the Christian Arabic manuscript tradition, the data colophons provide regarding the early manuscript production and its socio-cultural context is not otherwise accessible, except by means of other sorts of paratexts found in manuscripts (e.g. scribal notes, ownership notes, bequest statements, book curses, etc.).¹³

Colophons are attested across all pre-modern Eastern Christian manuscript cultures. Apart from the articles collected in the present volume, exemplary studies have been conducted by Avedis Sanjian and Anna Sirinian for Armenian,¹⁴ Gérard Troupeau and Feras Krimsti for Christian Arabic,¹⁵ Kurt Treu for Byzantine,¹⁶ Arnold van Lantschoot and more recently Hugo Lundhaug, Lance Jenott, and Agostino Soldati for Coptic,¹⁷ Amsalu Tefera, Marilyn Heldman, Monica Devens, Claire Bosc-Tiessé, Marie-Laure Derat, and Getachew Haile for Ethiopic,¹⁸ Adam McCollum for Georgian,¹⁹ and Heleen Murre-van den Bergh for Syriac colophons.²⁰ Just as in the present case, these studies single out well-defined sets of colophons, which may concur with temporal or geographical parameters or represent samples

¹² Hence, colophons are sometimes similar to *explicit*s in that they represent “the place (or places) in a manuscript where the scribe steps out from his copying work and speaks as an extra”; see McCollum, “Notes and Colophons,” p. 113. *Explicit*s formally conclude a text, but typically do not contain factoids. Colophons are normally found at the first or last folio of a manuscript. Our corpus, however, also includes samples of colophons found in between textual units.

¹³ We have, for instance, no letter exchanges of scribes discussing aspects of manuscript production, as we have in the Coptic tradition; see e.g. Kotsifou, “Books and Book Production in Byzantine Egypt.” There are also no book lists of professional scribes and book sellers of the kind attested in the Cairo Genizah; see the lists collected in Allony, *The Jewish Library in the Middle Ages* (in Hebrew). See also Frenkel, “Book lists from the Cairo Genizah.”

¹⁴ Sanjian, *Colophons of Armenian Manuscripts*; Sirinian, “On the Historical and Literary Value.”

¹⁵ Troupeau, “Les colophons;” Krimsti, “Signatures of Authority.”

¹⁶ Treu, “Schreibernotizen.”

¹⁷ van Lantschoot, *Recueil des colophons*; Ludhaug and Jenott, “Production, Distribution and Ownership;” Soldati, “Some Remarks.”

¹⁸ Tefera, “Colophon Reflections;” Heldman and Devens, “The Four Gospels of Däbrä Mär‘ar;” Haile, “The Marginal Notes.” See also Bosc-Tiessé and Derat, “Authority in Bəgwəna-Lasta.”

¹⁹ McCollum, “Notes and Colophons.”

²⁰ Murre-van den Bergh, “‘I the Weak Scribe’;” eadem, *Scribes and Scriptures*, Ch. 3. Many useful observations on colophons can also be found in the sections devoted to scribes in the codicological part of Bausi et al., *Comparative Oriental Manuscript Studies*. Adam McCollum has also devoted a number of blogs to colophons in Eastern Christian manuscripts on <<https://hmmmlorientalia.wordpress.com/>>.

of a specific collection. We have chosen to focus on Christian Arabic colophons written before 1000 CE, i.e. a time frame during which the use of colophons in Christian Arabic manuscripts starts to emerge. We further decided to limit our corpus geographically to colophons explicitly mentioning one of the three Palestinian monasteries of Saint Chariton, Saint Sabas, and Saint Catherine in order to be able to reach significant results with respect to these three important centers of early Christian Arabic manuscript production.

Some of the studies mentioned above have already developed typologies in order to assess their material.²¹ The most thorough classification of colophons thus far, however, was devised by Markus Schiegg who mainly focused on medieval European colophons, but also took into account colophons of pre-modern Eastern manuscript traditions.²² Given the multi-cultural setting of the Palestinian monasteries and other sorts of inter-cultural exchange that took place especially in the vicinity of popular pilgrimage sites in Syria-Palestine and the Sinai, Schiegg's categories provide proper tools of analysis for our corpus.

Schiegg offers three categories of classifications: (1) *formal classification*, which takes into consideration the length, language, and visual presentation of colophons; (2) *contextual classification*, which attends to the manuscript context of the colophons (correspondence between colophon and text types, script, language of texts, etc.); (3) *functional classification*, which aims at identifying scribal intentions through linguistic Speech Act Theory, identifying four types of relevant illocutions: (a) *assertives* provide factual information; (b) *expressives* display the scribe's emotions and attitudes towards his work; (c) *directives* aim at making the reader do something, typically pray for the scribe; (d) *declaratives* attempt to change the state of the world, mostly through curses, but also by signaling how the manuscript is supposed to be handled.²³

Here, we have singled out those features that seemed most relevant for our corpus. In the following, we will first attend to each subset of our corpus and mainly focus on *formal* and *functional* aspects. Even though the contents of the respective manuscripts will be mentioned, we will not make use of the *contextual* category, as we were not able to detect any relation between text types and the language or script employed in colophons. Related to that, we will not discuss in any detail the codicological features of the manuscripts in which the colophons are found, nor will we address issues of provenance. The reader is referred to the accompanying edition, translation, and commentary of our texts, where these questions are discussed.

The main *functional* features we discuss are *directives* and *expressives*. The two features are sometimes difficult to keep apart since they may occur in one and the

²¹ Cf. e.g. Troupeau, "Les colophons;" McCollum, "Notes and Colophons;" Soldati, "Some Remarks."

²² Schiegg, "Scribe's Voices."

²³ Schiegg, "Scribe's Voices," p. 141.

same sentence and be interrelated depending on the type of sentence (e.g. in conditional sentences). Thus, we define these categories here as depending on the grammatical person invoked. If the deity or saints are invoked, the speech act normally has the function of a wish (“may this happen”), even when included in a conditional sentence (“if you do this, may God reward you”), and is as such defined here as an *expressive*. In contrast, a *directive* is directed towards the human reader, typically asking him or her to pray for the scribe. *Declaratives* are rare in our corpus and will be discussed only with respect to one Sinaitic colophon (see section 5.4 below). *Assertive* features are discussed mainly in the sections on datation as well as in a section, which will offer some general observations (section 6). In each subset, we will also discuss paleographical features. One aim of these discussions, which are not directly related to colophon typology, is to collect criteria that may be used, at least with some probability, to connect anonymous colophons and manuscripts without colophons to one of the workshops of the three Palestinian monasteries.

3 COLOPHONS FROM SAINT CHARITON

The Monastery of Saint Chariton, located in the Tekoa Valley east of Jerusalem, was one of the founding places of Palestinian monasticism, going back to its instigator Chariton the Confessor in the fourth century CE.²⁴ The venerability of this site is expressed also in our colophon corpus where scribes refer to it as the “Old Lavra” (*al-sīq al-‘atīq*), mirroring the Greek *παλαιά λάβρα*, or as the “most ancient of lavras” (*qadīm al-asyāq*).²⁵ A “lavra” (lit. “alley, lane”) is a monastic setting, which typically emerged from a cluster of hermits’ cells. The Arabic term for “lavra,” *sīq*, probably goes back to Greek *σηκός* (“enclosure”), though some authors have connected it to Syriac *šūqā*, which has the same meaning as *λάβρα*, but was apparently also used to render *σηκός*.²⁶ Both the Monastery of Saint Chariton and the Monastery of Saint Sabas are called *sīq* by our scribes, while the Monastery of Saint Catherine is referred to by the term *dayr* (“convent, cloister”). Since Catherine of Alexandria only came to be adopted as the patron saint of the Sinai monastery from the 13th century CE onwards, she does not occur in our colophons. By contrast, the scribes of Saint Chariton and Saint Sabas refer to their places of activity as *sīq Mār(y) Ḥarīṭun* and *sīq Mār(y) Sābā*. The honorific title *Mār(y)* is clearly adapted from Syriac, lit. “my lord.”²⁷

²⁴ On Saint Chariton and his monastic foundations, see Bins, *Ascetics and Ambassadors of Christ*, pp. 45–47; Hirschfeld, “The Monastery of Chariton”; Hamilton and Jotischky, *Latin and Greek Monasticism*, p. 309.

²⁵ Cf. SA 75, f. 222r:14.

²⁶ Cf. de Goeje, “Sīq;” Brockelmann, *Lexicon Syriacum*, s.v. *šūqā*.

²⁷ As in Syriac, the final *yā*’ was probably not pronounced (hence we also find *Mār* without final *yā*’).

Among the ca. 40 Christian Arabic colophons dated or datable to the ninth and tenth centuries CE, four colophons in four manuscripts explicitly mention the Monastery of Saint Chariton. One of these is written by the scribe Iṣṭāfanā b. Ḥakam al-Ramlī (or Stephen of Ramla) who also left a second colophon in the same manuscript as well a separate colophon in another copy. Neither of the latter two mention the monastery. Still, we have included these two colophons here, as their connection to Saint Chariton is validated through the scribe's name.

1. **BL Or. 4950, f. 197v**
Contents: theology; date: 876/7 CE; scribe: Stephen of Ramla.
2. **BL Or. 4950, f. 237r-v**
Contents: see above; date: not specified (see above); scribe: Stephen of Ramla.
3. **SA 72, f. 118v**
Contents: gospels, theology; date: 897 CE; scribe: Stephen of Ramla.
4. **SA 75, f. 222r**
Contents: gospels; date: not specified (ca. late 9th c. CE); scribe: not specified.
5. **SANF Parch. 3**
Contents: patristic texts; date: lacunose, ca. 858–67 CE; scribe: name illegible.
6. **SANF Parch. 7, f. 127v**
Contents: gospels; date: 901/2 CE; scribe: Miḥā'il al-šammās (or Michael the Deacon).

Like the Sabaitic and Sinaitic colophons, the Charitonian colophons disclose only a few names of scribes. Their activity, however, is important evidence for the occupation of the monastery in the second half of the ninth and early tenth century CE and the need for Arabic-language books, whether they were used by people in the area or exported to other regions.²⁸ The manuscripts they copied contain theological works (BL Or. 4950), translations of the Gospels (SA 72, SA 75, SANF Parch. 7), and of patristic literature (SANF Parch. 3). Their colophons have certain features in common, which we will discuss below. These may not be exclusive to Charitonian scribes, but they are certainly typical of them.

3.1 Formal Features

The length of the colophons varies between eight and sixteen lines. This may be due to the amount of available space left on the folio page, but at least in one case the colophon stretches over two pages (BL Or. 4950, f. 237r-v). The amount of

²⁸ Hamilton and Jotischky, *Latin and Greek Monasticism*, p. 309; Griffith, "Stephen of Ramlah," p. 40; idem, "Anthony David of Baghdad," p. 16. See also Hjälms, "From Palestine to Damascus to Berlin."

words varies between ca. 30 and 140, which means that scribes to some extent decided whether to compose verbose or concise colophons. On average, the Charitonian colophons fill up about half a manuscript page.

It is noteworthy that all six colophons bear decorations. BL Or. 4950, f. 197v uses a floral ornament, consisting of four petals with black-brown outlines and red filling, loosely suggesting the shape of a cross, which is also used as a textual divider. The decoration marks the beginning of the colophon and is repeated three times below it in a horizontal line to mark the end of the textual unit. The colophon of SA 75 is separated from the preceding text by a horizontal line of nine similarly cross-shaped ornaments. These are designed even more frugally, consisting of five dots each with one dot in the middle in red and the rest in black-brown ink or vice versa. Most common are ribands, likewise colored in black-brown and red ink (BL Or. 4950, f. 237r–v; SA 72; SANF Parch. 7). They either exhibit some sort of braid pattern (drawn in straight or curved lines) or floral ornament. In each case, their horizontal arrangement serves to navigate the reader's eye and indicate the end of a textual unit.

3.2 Functional Features

The order of information provided in the colophons does not adhere to any specific template, not even when composed by the same scribe, as in the case of Stephen of Ramla who penned half of the Charitonian colophons. Assertives are often used at the beginning of a colophon, followed by expressive and directive statements, but they may also appear in the middle of the text of the colophon. Directives and expressives follow similar patterns, but are never mechanically reproduced as ready set phrases. Quite often, an expressive wish forms the apodosis of a directive statement. The basic content of directives across our corpus is to implore readers to pray for mercy on behalf of the scribe and not forget him (see the table below). In principle, the content of expressives is to wish for blessings on behalf of the reader and, in some cases, for the entire church (BL Or. 4950, f. 237r–v; SA 75). Saint Mary and Saint John are invoked by Stephen of Ramla in the colophon of SA 72, whereas Michael the Deacon mentions Mary only. It is noteworthy that Saint Chariton is never invoked in these colophons, especially in the light of the colophons from Saint Sabas' Monastery, which sporadically mention the monastery's patron saint (see section 3 below). Most notably, large portions of the Charitonian colophons are made up of a quotation from Matthew 25:34, which will be dealt with in section 3.2 below.

The following table shows the basic structure of directives, a functional feature which aims at making the reader do something. In our case, directives speak to the reader directly ("if you read") or indirectly ("whoever reads") and combine this address with a request not to forget the scribe. Even though this is a more generic expression, it has a clearly discernible communal dimension implying that someone is praying for the scribe as long as the manuscript is in use (a sort of spiritual payoff of the scribe's labor). Sometimes, the scribe also explicitly uses verbs of request (e.g. *ṭalaba*).

Ms.	Trans.	Text
BL Or. 4950, f. 197v	When you read , remember me, do not (17) forget [me] and God will not forget you and place you at his right ...	<i>idā anta qara'ta fa-udkurnī lā</i> (17) <i>tansā lā nasiyaka Allāh wa-aqāmaka 'an yamīnihi ...</i>
BL Or. 4950, f. 237r-v	<He asks of> (17) the one who reads in this volume to <invoke God in my (?) favor and that> God may give him mercy, forgiveness and <...> (19) burdened with trespasses. Do not forget [me], my brother, and <God will not> forget <you and place you> (20) at his right ...	<i>wa- < huwa yas'alu > (17) man qara'a fi hādā l-muṣḥaf an yad < 'ū lī (?) (18) wa-an > yahaba Allāh lī raḥma wa-maḡfira wa- < ... > (19) < al-taqī > l bi-l-ḡunūb lā yansā [sic!] yā aḡī lā nasiya < ka Allāh wa-aqāmaka > (20) 'an yamīnihi ...</i>
SA 72	When you read [this], my brother, remember me [and] (14) may God remember you and place you at his right ... Do not forget me (18), my brother, [and] God will not forget you ...	<i>idā anta qara'ta yā aḡī udkurnī ḡakaraka (14) Allāh wa-aqāmaka 'an yamīnihi ... lā tansānī (18) yā aḡī lā nasiyaka Allāh ...</i>
SANF Parch. 7	He requests of everyone (20) who read in it that he implores God on his behalf to forgive his many sins and (21) trespasses ... Do not forget to say of the scribe: “may God have mercy on you” (24) and place you at his right ...	<i>wa-huwa yaḡlubu ilā kull (20) man qara'a fihi yabtahilu ilā Allāh an yaḡfira lahu ḡaṡāyāhu (21) wa-ḡunūbahu al-kaṡīra ... lā tansā turahḡīmu 'alā l-kātib raḡimaka Allāh (24) wa-aqāmaka 'an yamīnihi ...</i>

As noted above, an expressive displays the writer's emotions, in our case a wish for something to happen. Even though the phrase is often marked in the indicative mood, it has a nuance of jussive in the sense that the response is up to the divine.

As such, it may serve as the apodosis of a directive statement as demonstrated in the table above. Additional examples are provided below.

Ms.	Trans.	Text
BL Or. 4950, f. 197v	May this be [so] for us by the intercession of the pure Saint Mary (21) and Saint John and [by] the prayers of all the righteous fathers, amen and amen.	<i>yakūnu lanā dālīka bi-šafāʿat Martmaryam al-tāhira (21) wa-Mār(y) Yuḥannā wa-šalawāt ḡamīʿ al-ābāʾ al-abrār āmin wa-āmin</i>
BL Or. 4950, f. 237v	May this be [so] for all the children of the universal, holy, and orthodox church of God (4), who, according to true faith, believe (5) in Jesus Christ to whom belongs glory with his Father (6) and his Holy Spirit, for ever, amen and amen.	<i>yakūnu dālīka li-ḡamīʿ banī kanīsat Allāh (4) al- <ḡamīʿa al-muqaddasa > al-urṭuduksiyya al-muʾmīna ʿalā amānat (5) Yasūʿ al-masīḥ allaḍī lahu al-maḡd maʿa abīhi (6) wa- <maʿa rūḥi > hi ilā l-abad āmin wa-āmin</i>
SA 72	May God have mercy on the one who read (25) and [the one who] wrote and may he give understanding and [ability] to keep the commandments to the one who acquires [it]. Amen.	<i>raḥīma Allāh man qaraʾa (25) wa-kataba wa-wahaba al-muqtanī al-fahm wa-ḥifẓ li-l-wašāyā āmin</i>
SA 75	May the Lord keep us in his prayers (16) and his intercession and [so also] all of the sons of the universal, luminous, (17) orthodox, pure, and holy church ... May God praise you with what has been written and place you (19) at his right [side] and make you hear the sweet, beau-	<i>yaḥfazunā al-rabb bi-šalawātihi (16) wa-šafāʿatihi wa-li-ḡamīʿ banī l-kanīsa al-ḡamīʿa al-munīra (17) al-urṭuduksiyya al-tāhira al-muqaddasa ... yuḥalliluka Allāh li-mā kutība wa-aqāmaka (19) ʿan yamīnihi wa-asmaʿaka al-ṣawt al-ḥulw al-baḥīy al-baḥīḡ ... yakūnu laka dālīka wa-li anā l-miskīn (22) bi-šalawāt Martmaryam</i>

	tiful, and delightful voice ... May this be [so] for you and me – I the poor one – (22) by the prayers of Saint Mary and Saint John and all the saints, amen.	<i>wa-Māri Yuḥannā wa-ḡami‘ al- qiddisīn āmīn</i>
SANF Parch. 7	(21) May God hear eve- ryone who reads and says “amen” ...	(21) <i>sami‘a Allāh mimman qara’a wa-man qāla āmīn ...</i>

3.3 Biblical Quotation

A noteworthy feature of the colophons produced by Charitonian scribes is the often used reference to Matthew 25:34. The biblical quotation is embedded in the directive (as part of a conditional sentence) or the expressive part of the colophon. It appears in both colophons of BL Or. 4950 as well as in SA 72, all of which were written by Stephen of Ramla. But it also occurs in the anonymous colophon of SA 75. SANF Parch. 7, copied by Michael the Deacon, arguably hints at it by way of the typical introductory phrase. Hence, all colophons authored by scribes active at Saint Chariton, except perhaps for SANF Parch. 3, which we were not able to access, include the reference.

The typical introductory phrase, which is not part of the biblical quotation itself, begins with “may [God] make you hear this voice...” (*asma‘aka dālika al-ṣawt*).²⁹ Like SANF Parch. 7, the colophons of BMCL BV 69b and BNU Or. 4225a, produced at Saint Catherine’s Monastery, seem to hint at the passage. Yet the fuller form, where the biblical text is provided in length, is typical only of the Charitonian colophons and might be considered a signature trait of its Christian Arabic scribal workshop.

3.4 Datation

If we turn to the assertive parts of the colophons, a striking feature of colophons authored at the Monastery of Saint Chariton is the use of multiple calendric systems. In the first colophon of BL Or. 4950, Stephen of Ramla refers to three systems: (1) the World Era;³⁰ (2) the Alexandrian Era, by which is meant the Seleucid

²⁹ Cf. BL Or. 4950, f. 197v:17–18; BL Or. 4950, f. 237r:20; SA 72, f. 118v:14; SA 75, f. 222r:19.

³⁰ On the two different Alexandrian World Eras, that of Panodoros (starting in August–September 5493 BC) and that of Annianos (starting in March 5492 BC), see Swanson, “Some Considerations,” pp. 130–131. See in this article also other relevant calculation systems.

Era; (3) the Muslim Hijra calendar. In SA 72, the same scribe uses a World Era date and a Hijra date and provides the year both written out in Arabic and in Greek numerals. Neither the second colophon of BL Or. 4950 nor that in SA 75 are dated. SANF Parch. 3 uses the World Era. In SANF Parch. 7, however, which seems to be the youngest Charitonian colophon in our corpus, only the Hijra calendar is used. The use of multiple systems and/or the World Era calendar is thus used only in the earliest dated manuscripts from Saint Chariton. Though various calendars continued to be used in other material, our colophons may bear witness to a change in the perception of what was the public measure of time relevant to relate to.

It appears that the term for “world era” was translated into Arabic *ad hoc* by the scribes, which would explain its various forms in the colophons. In BL Or. 4950, Stephen of Ramla refers to it as (*ḥisāb*) *sinī l-dunyā* and in SA 72 as (*ḥisāb*) *sinī l-ālam*. In both cases, he uses the genitive construction expected in Classical Arabic (genitive *sinīn* of *sinūn* with dropped end-*nūn* in construct state). The scribe of SANF Parch. 3 uses both terms, clearly understood as synonyms: *sinīn al-dunyā* and *sinīn al-ālam*. Yet, as opposed to Stephen of Ramla, he uses a non-Classical genitive construction, where the end-*nūn* is retained.

There is a third translation of the term “world era,” which is found outside of Saint Chariton. In two signed manuscripts (BNF Ar. 6725c, f. 11r and SA 309, f. 217r), the scribe Dawīd al-ʿAsqalānī (David of Askalon) who was active in the church of the Anastasis in Jerusalem, uses the Arabic expression (*min*) *sinī Ādam*. The same term is used in the colophon of SG 34b, produced at the Monastery of Saint Sabas. Whereas SG 34b uses the World Era calendar next to the Hijra calendar, David of Askalon only uses World Era datation. Hence, SG 34b is one of the few manuscripts outside Saint Chariton, which also uses a multiple calendric system. This observation entails that many, but by no means all, manuscripts, in which the scribe uses multiple calendars, are connected to Saint Chariton.

It should also be mentioned that Stephen of Ramla employs month names according to different calendars. In the first colophon of BL Or. 4950, the first day of December (ذَقْمَرَس) is provided according to the Roman calendar and the month Rabīʿ al-Awwal according to the Hijra calendar. In SA 72, he refers to “the months of the non-Arabs (*ašhar al-ağam*)” when using the first month of Āḍār, i.e. the month names of the Syrian calendar, next to the Muslim month Muḥarram. Here he also uses Greek numerals in addition to writing out the year of the World Era date in Arabic letters. It appears that BNU Or. 4225e also refers to months according to two different systems (cf. 5.3), as does the translation note in SANF Parch. 66 (cf. 4.3).

One of the best known colophons from one of the Palestinian monasteries is the anonymous colophon in SANF Parch. 16, which offers yet another translation option for “world era,” viz. [*min*] *sinīn al-dahr*. It is used next to the dating “according to the years of the Romans” (*min sinīn al-rūm*) as well as to that of the Hijra

calendar.³¹ There are several unclarities regarding the Common Era date of this manuscript and both 859 CE and 873 CE have been suggested as possible interpretations.³² In any event, even though the place of production is not mentioned, the use of multiple (three) calendars makes it likely that the manuscript was produced at Saint Chariton and that the scribe was an older contemporary of Stephen of Ramla, since both scribes reflect a similar practice in datation according to no less than three systems. With the exception of the early Charitonian scribes, David of Askalon, one scribe from Saint Sabas (SG 34b), and perhaps one from Sinai (BNU Or. 4225e),³³ all early Christian Arabic colophons give dates according to the Hijra calendar (though occasionally using month names from other calendric systems). This also holds of the anonymous colophons of our broader corpus and not just of those mentioning the place of production, which we discuss here.

3.5 Paleographical Features

The handwriting of Stephen of Ramla, Michael the Deacon, and the scribes of SA 75 and SANF Parch. 3 show clear affinities. We will discuss their hands here in some detail in order to evaluate the questions of closer collaboration and whether some sort of workshop style is discernible. What is particularly difficult when examining and comparing the handwritings of specific scribes on a more detailed level is the fact that one and the same scribe not seldom exhibits inconsistency with regard to letter shapes, that the material components of the writing support may affect the writing (format, material, layout, size), and that the quality of digital reproductions (color, lighting, resolution) influences our impression. That said, some observations can nevertheless be made. Methodologically, it is safer to assume that if difference in script is detected, the manuscripts were not copied by the same hand. However, and although difficult to prove, we shall remain open to the idea that scribes sometimes changed certain ways of writing a letter.

In general, the manuscripts written by Stephen of Ramla (BL Or. 4950, SA 72) and SA 75 display great similarity,³⁴ which becomes even more clear when comparing the colophons authored by the two scribes. Similar expressions used are *wakāna kamāl kitābihi*, “the writing of [this book] was completed,” or *wa-aqāmaka ‘an yamīnihi wa-asma‘aka al-ṣawt*, “may he place you at his right [side] and make you hear the voice.” If viewed next to each other, the phrases are written in a very similar ductus. However, a notable paleographic difference is that whereas *alif* in

³¹ SANF Parch. 16, f. 5r:6–9.

³² Swanson, “Some Considerations,” p. 133.

³³ In BNU Or. 4225e, the scribe active at Saint Catherine’s Monastery may have used more than one calendar, referring to “the month of Romans” (*šahr al-rūm*) next to the Muslim month name. Yet, the extremely fragmentary state of the folio does not allow to judge whether he also gave the year in both Muslim and Christian datation.

³⁴ Hjälml, “Paleographical Study,” pp. 56–60.

SA 72 is sometimes curvy, sometimes straight, it is usually straight in SA 75. In addition, in Stephen of Ramla's hand, the tail of final *mīm* leans to the left whereas it leans to the right in SA 75.

The handwriting of the scribe of SANF Parch. 3 also shares many features with the hand of Stephen of Ramla, as noted by Alexander Treiger, including final *mīm*.³⁵ However, in general, the script of SANF Parch. 3 is less horizontally elongated than in the other manuscripts in the group and exhibits more round forms. The particularly angular shape of *kāf* in Stephen of Ramla's hand exhibits sharper angles and more elongated base lines than what we see in the script of SANF Parch. 3. The latter is also rather similar to the anonymous hand of SA 75. In fact, both SA 75 and SANF Parch. 3 use the expression *al-siq al-ʿatīq*, "the Old Laura," to refer to Saint Chariton as the place of production. SANF Parch. 3 is a small codex (110–112 x 92–95 mm, 10 lines/page) made for personal use, which sets it apart from all the other manuscripts in our corpus. The size of the manuscript may explain the less elongated shape of letters and limits paleographical comparison. In any event, this important finding shows that Stephen of Ramla, Michael the Deacon, the anonymous scribe of SA 75, and what now might be a fourth person connected to the scribal workshop of Saint Chariton, closely collaborated and produced a substantial number of manuscripts.

SANF Parch. 7, copied by Michael the Deacon, and BL Or. 4950 as well as SA 72, copied by Stephen of Ramla, display clear, often identical letter shapes. In addition, SANF Parch. 7 and SA 72 use identical decorations (see section 3.1 above). This shows that these Charitonian scribes probably shared the same context of training, which makes it difficult to keep their hands apart. In general, however, SANF Parch. 7 displays a less round and smooth impression than Stephen of Ramla's hand. Yet, the most significant difference in letter shapes, in fact, evinces the opposite: Michael the Deacon presents us with a round featured independent *dāl/dāl* grapheme, whereas Stephen of Ramla as well as the scribe of SA 75 write an angular *dāl/dāl*. Like SA 75, SANF Parch. 7 normally has a straight (not curvy) *alif*. In this connection, the question also arises whether Michael the Deacon is identical to Michael the Priest who signed one of the manuscripts in our Sinaitic corpus, as suggested by Treiger.³⁶ We will postpone this question to the discussion of the Sinaitic colophons below (section 5.5).

Against the backdrop of these observations, we may turn to a number of manuscripts, which are not part of our corpus, but seem to have been copied by the same scribes just discussed. The anonymous scribe of SA 75 may also have copied SA 431 and the manuscript of which now one fragmented bifolium is preserved in the fly-leaf added to SG 34 (SG 34a; note for instance the way final *mīm* is written).³⁷ Michael the Deacon's handwriting bears great similarity with the hand that

³⁵ We thank Alexander Treiger for sharing his thoughts on the matter with us.

³⁶ Treiger, "Palestinian Origenism," p. 64n71.

³⁷ Hjälml, "Paleographical Study," pp. 59–60.

copied St. Andrews 14 (and its continuation in CRL Ming. Chr. Ar. Add. 140), which preserves one of the theological tracts copied by Stephen of Ramla in BL Or. 4950.³⁸

Finally, based both on the similarity in script and the advanced dating system, SANF Parch. 16 (and its *membrum disiectum* SANF Parch. 14) may have been produced at Saint Chariton as already noted. It exhibits the overall angular shape and horizontal extension of the script, typical of Stephen of Ramla's and Michael the Deacon's hands (especially with respect to the *kāf* grapheme) as well as the angular shape of *dāl/dāl* of Stephen of Ramla's hand. SANF Parch. 16 exhibits even more sharp angles and straight strokes than the manuscripts surveyed thus far (i.e. only little New Style influence).³⁹ Most importantly, however, it includes some typically ancient letter forms and precedes the manuscripts produced by Stephen of Ramla as well as the other Charitonian manuscripts in date. For instance, SANF Parch. 16 places one diacritical dot below instead of two dots above the body of *qāf* and final *nūn* resembles the *rā'* grapheme.⁴⁰

4 COLOPHONS FROM SAINT SABAS

Even more than the Monastery of Saint Chariton, the Monastery of Saint Sabas, located in the Kidron Valley between Bethlehem and the Dead Sea and founded in the fifth century CE, emerged as one of the most important centers of Palestinian monasticism in late antiquity. As Bernard Hamilton and Andrew Jotischky point out, one "reason for the eminence in which St Sabas was held was the high level of scribal and literary activity in the monastery."⁴¹ This activity is continued in Islamic times and mirrored in the early Christian Arabic manuscript corpus, which testifies to the monastery's importance as a center of translation and manuscript production. In at least two cases, we find a monk from Saint Catherine's Monastery ordering hagiographic books from Saint Sabas (BAV Ar. 71, RNL Ar. N.S. 263 and its *membra disiecta*). This may indicate that Saint Sabas Monastery served as a sort of archive of monastic texts and highlights its role in cultural transfer. Texts pro-

³⁸ Hjälms, "Lost and Found"; Hoyland, "St Andrews MS. 14." As we have seen above, sharp angles and elongated *kāf* graphemes, which we also find in St. Andrews 14, are typical of both Stephen of Ramla and Michael the Deacon. What makes the script of St. Andrews 14 particularly similar to Michael the Deacon's hand, however, is the round shape of independent *dāl/dāl*.

³⁹ New Style scripts introduce more curvy features. For the term "New Style," see Déroche, *The Abbasid Tradition*.

⁴⁰ For this reason, Hjälms, "Paleographical Study," pp. 53–54 places SANF Parch. 14/16 in Group A. See there also other manuscripts possibly copied by the same scribe. On the Christian Arabic scribal convention of writing *qāf* with one dot below the body of the letter, see Monferrer-Sala, "Once Again on the Earliest Arabic Apology."

⁴¹ Hamilton and Jotischky, *Latin and Greek Monasticism*, p. 310.

duced at this monastery have for instance been found in Damascus.⁴² The monastery, of course, was not only a center of Christian learning, but also of ascetic spirituality. As indicated above, the scribes from Saint Sabas in our corpus use the expression *siq Mār(y) Sābā* (or *siq al-qiddis Mār Sābā/siq Mār Sābā al-qiddis*) to refer to their place of activity. But they also employ terms like *barriyyat Mār Sābā al-qiddis* (“the desert of the holy Saint Sabas”) or *barriyyat bait al-maqdis* (“the desert of Jerusalem”) – Saint Sabas was himself known as the “star of the desert” (*kawkab al-barriyya*).⁴³ The term *barriyya* (“wilderness, back country, desert”), which is still in use today to refer to the region, is probably related to Greek *ἐρημία*, which, in a monastic context, not only refers to features of the landscape, but also to the sort of asceticism practiced in the desert. The colophons explicitly mentioning the Monastery of Saint Sabas are the following:

1. **BAV Ar. 71, f. 236r**
Contents: monastic literature; date: 885 CE; scribe: Anṭūna Dawūd b. Sulaymān al-Baġdādī (Anthony David of Baghdad).
2. **RNL Ar. N.S. 263, f. 5v**
Contents: monastic literature; date: 885/6 CE; scribe: Anthony David of Baghdad.
3. **LUB Cod. Gr. 2, f. 17r**
Membrum disiectum of SANF Parch. 66 below. Contents: see below; date: not specified (see below); scribe: Dawīd al-Ḥimṣī al-Naġġār (David of Homs the Carpenter)
4. **SANF Parch. 40, f. 26r**
Contents: Acts; date: not specified (ca. 9th c. CE); scribe: name illegible.
5. **SANF Parch. 66, f. 4v**
Contents: hagiography; date: not specified (early 10th c. CE); scribe: David of Homs
6. **SG 34b, f. 218r**
Contents: Greek-Arabic Psalter; date: 929/30 CE; scribe: not specified.

The colophon of SANF Parch. 40, which was discovered in 2017 by Vevian Zaki, is the most recent addition to the early Christian Arabic colophon corpus. Due to the fragmentary state of preservation of the manuscript, the scribe’s name is no longer legible (M[...]‘[...] is all we have). The only name of a Christian Arabic scribe we can connect to the monastery with certainty in the 9th/10th century CE is that of Anthony David of Baghdad to whom Sidney Griffith devoted a study in the late 1980s.⁴⁴ The colophon of SANF Parch. 66 does not refer to the Monastery of Saint Sabas as the place of production, but as the location of the manuscript’s commissioner. However, as argued by André Binggeli, the manuscript was very likely pro-

⁴² Hjälml, “From Palestine to Damascus to Berlin.”

⁴³ Cf. Fleischer, *Kleinere Schriften*, vol. 3, p. 380.

⁴⁴ Griffith, “Anthony David.”

duced at Saint Sabas as well, since it was determined for internal use within the monastery.⁴⁵ Hence, David of Homs was probably another monk working at Saint Sabas, active about one generation after Anthony David of Baghdad. SANF Parch. 66 and LUB Cod. Gr. 2 (also known as Tichendorf Rescriptus II) are two *membra disiecta* of the same original codex. LUB Cod. Gr. 2 does not mention Saint Sabas, but since we know the scribe, we include it here. All the above manuscripts transmit typically monastic literature, such as hagiography and homilies (BAV Ar. 71, RNL Ar. N.S. 263, SANF Parch. 66) as well as bible translations (SANF Parch. 40, SG 34b).

4.1 Formal Features

The Sabaitic colophons vary between 5 and 13 lines in length. One of them is found in a bilingual Greek-Arabic Psalter (SG 34b) and written at the end of the right Arabic column, continuing two lines under the left Greek column. In this case, the scribe apparently did not carefully plan the amount of space needed for the colophon. Again, we find rather verbose texts next to crisp formulations (cf. SANF Parch. 40 and LUB Cod. Gr. 2). Generally, however, the Sabaitic colophons tend to take up more space than those from Saint Chariton. At least in three cases (BAV Ar. 71, RNL Ar. N.S. 263, SANF Parch. 66), the colophon covers more than two thirds of the manuscript page.

Not all colophons from Saint Sabas' Monastery bear decorations. In the Greek-Arabic Psalter, the only feature that sets the colophon apart from the rest of the text is the use of red ink. In SANF Parch. 66, the scribe makes ample use of textual dividers in the shape of red circles with a black dot in the middle as well as five dots arranged in the shape of a cross. They do not, however, serve the function of making the colophon visually distinct from the rest of the text. The remaining four colophons are decorated. In SANF Parch. 40, where the colophon is preserved at the end of a fragmented folio (ca. $\frac{3}{4}$ text loss), the decoration is simple, but effective: under the last line of writing runs a straight horizontal line, which is disrupted at regular intervals by two short dabs in the shape of inverted commas. Below the straight lines clusters of four dots, which also serve as textual dividers above, run in a parallel horizontal line. Both the text of the colophon as well as the decoration are executed in red ink. In LUB Cod. Gr. 2, the colophon is found at the bottom of the page, which is formally concluded with a horizontal riband in black-brown and red ink. Above this decoration and beneath the text of the colophon, there is a peculiar decorative feature arranged horizontally and in repetition, which also serves as a textual divider in the text above. It consists of three black dots on the left and one black dot in a red circle on the right, which are connected by what looks like a curved arrow with a red head. The two colophons authored by Anthony David of Baghdad are carefully planned. They are written in red ink with diacritical marks

⁴⁵ Binggeli, "Les trois David," pp. 102–104.

in black-brown ink. The decorations are arranged as a frame around the text of the colophons and exhibit several elements. In RNL Ar. N.S. 263, the frame consists of connected horizontal and vertical ribands in a simplified braid pattern or zigzag design.⁴⁶ The same design is used in BAV Ar. 71, but only above the text of the colophon in order to separate it from the preceding text. Below the riband runs a horizontal line of cross-shaped dot arrangements, which also make up the vertical parts and the lower horizontal part of the frame (the outer left margin of the folio is not preserved, but it very likely exhibited the same design).

4.2 Functional Features

Like in the Charitonian colophons, the arrangement of factoids (assertives), directives, and expressives in the Sabaitic colophons is rather loose and not even Anthony David of Baghdad's two texts are completely identical. Both begin with factoids relating to scribe, place and commissioner, and close the colophons with the date of production. In between the assertives, directives and expressives are included, yet not in the same order. David of Homs's colophon is longer and more complex, especially since it adds a second expressive relating to the commissioner of the manuscript. SG 34b dispenses with any directive speech as does what little is legible in SANF Parch. 40.

As noted above, expressives are defined in this study as addressing divine realities or saints, which basically turn such phrases into wishes. Directives are directed at the readers of the manuscript, typically asking them to pray to God for mercy on behalf of the scribe. There is not much to be said about the small amount of directives in the Sabaitic colophons, save that Anthony David of Baghdad uses the two verbs "ask" (*sa'ala*) and "request" (*ṭalaba*) and that David of Homs's elaborate directive invokes Christ's love, seemingly twice, and that he, like the Charitonian monks, asks not to be forgotten.

Ms.	Trans.	Text
BAV Ar. 71, f. 236r	(8) ... And I, the weak sinner who wrote it, ask (9) and requests of everyone who reads in it about the Holy Fathers (10) and others to re-	(8) ... <i>wa-anā l-ḥāṭī' al-ḍa'if allaḍī katabahu as'alu</i> (9) <i>wa-aṭlubu ilā kull man qara'a fīhi min al-abbahāt al-qiddisīn</i> (10) <i>wa-ḡayrihim an yaṭlubū wa-yas'alū Yasū' al-</i>

⁴⁶ Above the frame, there is a black cross with red dots in its four angles. The same design is repeated three times in a horizontal row within the frame below the text of the colophon. After the first and second cross, one reads in black-brown ink: "may God forgive the one who wrote" (*ḡafara Allāh li-man kataba*). The text appears to be part of the decoration of the colophon, but is written in a different hand and was, therefore, possibly added later.

	quest of and ask Jesus Christ, our God (11) and saviour, to forgive my many sins and trespasses ...	<i>Masiḥ ilāhanā</i> (11) <i>wa-muḥalliṣanā an yağfira ḥaṭāyāya wa-ḏuniḇi l-kaṭira</i> ...
RNL Ar. N.S. 263, f. 5v	(8) ... And I , the poor sinner who (9) wrote this volume, ask of all who read in it and request of them (10) that they pray for me and ask Christ for forgiveness of my sins ...	(8) ... <i>wa-anā l-ḥāṭi' al-miskin allaḏi</i> (9) <i>kataba hādā l-muṣḥaf as'alu li-kull man qara'a fihi wa-aṭlubu ilayhi</i> (10) <i>an yaṣliya</i> [sic!] 'alaya <i>wa-yas'alu al-Masiḥ fi ḡufrān ḥaṭāyāya</i> ...
LUB Cod. Gr. 2	(20) He asks everyone who reads this volume to pray for him for mercy and forgiveness, for the sake (21) of the love of Christ, our God and Lord.	(20) <i>wa-yas'alu kull man qara'a hādā l-muṣḥaf an yad'ū lahu bi-l-raḥmat wa-l-mağfira min ağ<l></i> (21) <i>ḥubb al-Masiḥ ilāhinā wa-sayyidinā</i>
SANF Parch. 66	(13) He makes <i>metanoia</i> ⁴⁷ and kisses the feet of everyone who reads this volume, full of light and life, (14) and asks him for the sake of < the love > of our Lord Jesus Christ to on his behalf pray for mercy and forgiveness (15) and help, of that which is required of him by/for God, for he is a stranger to all what is good and far from all virtue (16) and the way of the blessed fathers. Thus, for the love of Christ our God do not	(13) <i>wa-huwa yaṣna'ū miṭāniya wa-yuqabbilu arğul kull man qara'a hādā l-muṣḥaf al-mumtalā nūr wa-ḥayāt</i> (14) <i>wa-yas'aluhu min ağl ḥubb sayyidinā Yasū' al-Masiḥ an yad'ū lahu bi-l-raḥma wa-l-mağfira</i> (15) <i>wa-l-ma'ūna 'alā mā yağibu li-Llah 'alayhi fa-inna ḡarīb min kull ḥayr wa-mutabā'id min kull ṣalāh</i> (16) <i>wa-min sirat al-ābā' al-mubārakīn fa-min ağl ḥubb al-Masiḥ ilāhinā lā tansūni yā abbahāti wa-lā</i> (17) <i>tad'ū tuḏkurūni fi ṣalawātikum wa-ḥalawātikum al-maqbūla fa-inni ilā ḏālika muḏtarr</i> ...

⁴⁷ I.e. prostration to signal his will to repent, a spiritual reformation.

	<p>forget me, o my fathers, and do not (17) cease remembering me in your prayers and your acceptable hermitages. I am in urgent need of that...</p>	
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Of great interest are the expressives in the colophons from Saint Sabas since here we can detect a pattern. All these manuscripts contain expressives, i.e. wishes or requests aimed at the divine, where various subjects involved in the production and use of the manuscript are mentioned. Between three (SG 34b) and six (BAV Ar. 71) agents who take part in the copying or reading process are included in the expressives. The two colophons penned by Anthony David of Baghdad and the main colophon copied by David of Homs (i.e. SANF Parch. 66) exhibit identical structures with regard to agents, except for the addition of “the one who made (*fa‘ala*) it” in BAV Ar. 71, and the omission of “the one who heard (*sami‘a*)” in RNL Ar. N.S. 263. That is to say, they basically all⁴⁸ include scribes (*man kataba*), commissioners (*man istaktaba*), readers (*man qara‘a*), listeners (*man sami‘a*), and supplicants, i.e. persons “saying amen” (*man qāla amin*) in this order. SANF Parch. 40 is too damaged to be properly evaluated in this regard but it clearly includes several agents. SG 34b is thus the only manuscript in our small corpus that somewhat deviates from the pattern. However, it too involves three agents: the reader (*man qara‘a*), listener (*man sami‘a*), and supplicant (*man da‘ā*), which still sets it apart from the Charitonian corpus. In the latter, only two colophons contain such agents and then only two of them (SA 72: scribe and reader; and SANF Parch. 7: reader and supplicant). Also colophons from Saint Catherine’s Monastery contain several agents, yet there we encounter more variation. As we will see below, half of them lack any mention of agents involved in the production process or are too damaged to tell, whereas it is difficult to see any clear pattern in the four colophons that contain such information. It is of great interest that the first colophon in the Sinaitic manuscript SANF Parch. 1 exhibits the exact same pattern often found in the Sabaitic colophons. The mentioning of Isaac the Monk from Mount Sinai in Anthony David of Baghdad’s two colophons as well as the name of the scribe Isaac in the second colophon in SANF Parch. 1 also indicate a close link between the two monasteries and their Christian Arabic scribal settings and it is not unlikely that the workshop of Saint Saba trained scribes who were later active at other monasteries. Likewise, the agents and their order in the colophons in the Sabaitic SG 34b and that in the Sinaitic SA 514 are the same.

⁴⁸ David of Homs’ second colophon, i.e. that in LUB Cod. Gr. 2, does not mention any agents, perhaps since this colophon was seen as supplementing the longer one in SANF Parch. 66.

Other than this, we could mention that Anthony David of Baghdad's expressives invoke the intercession of Saint Mary and Saint Sabas as well as between two (BAV Ar. 71) and six (RNL N.S. Ar. 263) more abstract categories of saints, such as righteous people and prophets. David of Homs invokes the intercession of Saint Mary and Saint Stephen and "the fathers in this volume," likely referring to the characters in and authors of the *Lives* he copied. SG 34b does not include any requests for intercessions and SANF Parch. 40 is again too damaged to tell. As mentioned above, Saint Mary, Saint John, and "all the saints" or similar formulations are invoked in some of the Charitonian manuscripts, whereas the Sinaitic colophons are very sparse in this regard. A few Sinaitic colophons mention Mary and "the holy ones" or a similar phrasing, indicating that Mary was the local saint (cf. section 5 below).

Ms.	Trans.	Text
BAV Ar. 71	(12) May God have mercy on <i>the one who made and the one who wrote and the one who commissioned and the one who read</i> (13) <i>and the one who heard and said amen</i> , by the intercession of the Lady, Saint Mary , (14) and our father Saint Saba and all his righteous and saints , amen	(12) <i>rahīma Allāh man fa'ala wa-man kataba wa-man istaktaba wa-man qara'a</i> (13) <i>wa-man sami'a wa-man qāla āmin bi-šafā'at</i> al-sayyida Martmaryam (14) wa-abūnā Mār Sābā wa-ḡamī' abrārihi wa-qiddisihi āmin.
RNL Ar. N.S. 263	So, we ask Christ our God (4) and our saviour, by the intercession of the Lady, Mother of Light, the pure Saint Mary (5) the blessed one , and [by] the prayers of all his apostles, disciples, prophets, (6) and martyres , and [by] the prayers of our father the holy man Saint Saba and all (7) his holy men, and those close to [God] to be merciful	(3) ... <i>fa-nas'alu al-Masiḥ ilāhanā</i> (4) <i>wa-muḥallisanā bi-šafā'at al-sayyida umm al-nūr Martmaryam al-tāhira</i> (5) <i>al-mubāraka wa-šalawāt ḡamī' rusulihi wa-talāmiḍihi wa-anbiyā'ihī</i> (6) <i>wa-šuhadā'ihī wa-šalawāt abūnā al-qiddis Mār Sābā wa-ḡamī'</i> (7) <i>qiddisihi wa-aṣfiyāhi an yuraḥḥima wa-yaḡfira ḥaṭāyā man kataba</i> (8) <i>wa-istaktaba āmin ...</i> (10) ... <i>as'alu al-Masiḥ</i> (11) <i>ilāhanā bi-faḍlihi wa-raḥmatihī an-yuraḥḥimahu man kataba wa-istaktaba wa-man qara'a</i> (12) <i>wa-qāla āmin</i>

	and forgive the sins of <i>the one who wrote (8) and the one who commissioned [it], amen....</i> I ask Christ, (11) our God, for his favour and his mercy to have mercy on <i>the one who wrote, [the one who] commissioned, and the one who read [it] (12) and said "amen."</i>	...
SANF Parch. 40	(1) May God have mercy on <i>the one who wrote <...> <and the one who></i> (2) <i>says amen, Lord of the Worlds ...</i> (5) ... He asks Christ for mercy and forgiveness <...>	(1) <i>raḥima Allāh man katta <ba> <...> <wa-man></i> (2) <i>yaqūlu āmin rabb al-‘ālamīn ...</i> (5) ... <i>wa-huwa yas’alu al-Masiḥ al-raḥma wal-maḡ <fira> <...></i>
LUB Cod. Gr. 2	(21) ... May God be content with the one who made this, amen.	(21) ... <i>raḍiya Allāh ‘an man fa‘ala ḍālika āmin.</i>
SANF Parch. 66	(18) May Christ be pleased with <i>the one who wrote and the one who commissioned and the one who read and the one who heard and said "amen, amen, amen."</i> ... (20) I ask Christ the Eternal Son of God to give him (his) hope and make him worthy to read and be fruitful and fulfill what he requests (21) to be worthy of standing at his right [side] at the day of repayment by the intercession of our Lady Saint Mary, the pure virgin, (22) and by the prayers	(18) <i>raḍiya al-Masiḥ ‘an man kataba wa-man istaktaba wa-man qara’a wa-man sami‘a wa-qāla āmin āmin āmin ...</i> (20) <i>as’alu al-Masiḥ bn Allāh al-azālī an-yu‘ṭiyahu amalahu wa-yusāwiyahu an yaqra’a wa-yamṭura wa-yakmula mā yaṭlubu</i> (21) <i>li-yasta’hila al-qiyāma ‘an yamīnihi fī yawm al-muḡāzāh bi-ṣafā‘at sayyidat-inā Martmaryam al-batūl al-ḡāhira</i> (22) <i>wa-bi-ṣalawāt hādā l-qiddis Mār(y) Istāfanus wa-ḡami‘ al-ābā’ al-maḍkūrīna fī hādā l-muṣḥaf āmin.</i>

	of this holy Saint Stephen and all the fathers mentioned in this volume, amen.	
SG 34b	(15) ... May God have mercy on <i>the one who</i> (16) <i>read and heard and prayed</i> for the scribe ...	(15) ... <i>rahīma Allāh man</i> (16) <i>qara'a wa-sami'a wa-da'a li-l-kātib ...</i>

4.3 Datation

Three of the Sabaitic colophons are dated (BAV Ar. 71, RNL Ar. N.S. 263, SG 34b). Two of these were authored by Anthony David of Baghdad. As highlighted already by Griffith, the two manuscripts (BAV Ar. 71, RNL Ar. N.S. 263/BNU Or. 4226b) were copied in the same year, which is given in Hijra datation, viz. 277 (= 885/86 CE).⁴⁹ The datation system is referred to as “in the years of the Arabs” (*min sinī l-‘arab*). There is another way of marking the use of Hijra datation, possibly also employed by Sabaitic scribes, namely by means of the adjective *hilāliyya*, i.e. “lunar.”⁵⁰

In BAV Ar. 71, Anthony David also gives the month according to the Islamic calendar, viz. Rabi‘ al-Awwal, which corresponded to August/September in that year. Both times the year is written out in Arabic. By contrast, in SG 34b the year is both written out in Arabic and given in Greek numerals. As mentioned above, this scribe uses two calendric systems, viz. the World Era calendar and the Hijra calendar. Interestingly, the year is written out in Arabic in combination with the World Era datation and given in Greek numerals in combination with the Hijra calendar. Again, both systems are marked with the phrases “in the years of Adam” (*min sinī Ādam*) and “in the years of the Arabs” (*min sinī l-‘arab*). The colophon of SG 34b also indicates that the manuscript was completed at the feast day of the patron saint Sabas. The colophon of SANF Parch. 66 is not dated, but the foregoing textual unit, an Arabic translation of Leontius of Damascus’ *Life of Stephen the Sabaite*, gives the date of the completion of the translation as follows: “This translation was completed on Tuesday of the week of *hyperthesis* – [this week] comes before [the festival of] Palms – with three days remaining in the month of March, which is to say Ādār, in the year 290.”⁵¹ In contrast to the datations found in our colophon corpus,

⁴⁹ Griffith, “Anthony David,” p. 10.

⁵⁰ This feature is used in the colophons of BMCL BV 47, f. 79v:4; BNU Or. 4226a, f. 1r:2. The colophon of SA 580, f. 205v:12 even uses the expression *li-hiğrat al-‘arab*, “according to the Hijra [Era] of the Arabs.”

⁵¹ Lamoreaux (trans.), *The Life of Stephen of Mar Sabas*, pp. 132–133; slightly modified.

here the dating is inordinately specific, providing not only the day of the week and month, but also the feasts of the current and the following week. The month is given according to the Roman (*Mart̄s*) and Syrian calendar (*Āḏār*), while the year is given according to the Hijra calendar, which, here is not marked as such.⁵² As said above (section 3.4), the Charitonion scribe Stephen of Ramla also uses Roman and Muslim month names side by side in the first colophon of BL Or. 4950.

4.4 Paleographical Features

Anthony David of Baghdad's elegant handwriting exhibits many New Style features and has been described elsewhere, as have David of Homs' angular script, which represents an adaptation of Early Abbasid book hands.⁵³ Hence, it may suffice here to give short descriptions of the paleographical features of SANF Parch. 40 and SG 34b, which are not available elsewhere.

What little remains of SANF Parch. 40, it is clear that it is elegantly written and displays a horizontally elongated script with some curvy features, typical of New Style scripts. It preserves no typically ancient traits and rather resembles later witnesses of early Abbasid book hands.⁵⁴ Two diacritics are written above the consonantal skeleton of *qāf*, the tail of final *mīm* is slanting leftwards in a soft curve, final *kāf* lacks a head serif (at least in our sample), and the *dāl/dāl* grapheme has an angular shape. On the basis of some of these characteristics, we suggest that it was composed during the first half of the tenth century CE. The closest witness to this sort of handwriting is, to the best of our knowledge, a group of manuscripts which seem to have been penned by Thomas of Fustat or his Sinaitic workshop (see section 5.5 below).

In the bilingual SG 34b, the Arabic column may have been written by different hands (see, for instance, f. 123r). In any event, the main hand is similar to that in the well-known Gospel manuscript SA 74. In addition to the overall similar impression, final *kāf* often has a particular tripartite form in both, where the vertically extended head serif is the longest component of the letter. However, whereas *alif* is often curvy or straight and the *dāl/dāl* grapheme rather angular in SG 34b, *alif* is normally featured as a nail in SA 74 and the *dāl/dāl* grapheme takes a more elliptic form. In both manuscripts, a later hand has filled in certain letters, where the ink apparently had faded and they may have been restored by the same person. SANF

⁵² The colophon of SANF Parch. 16, possibly of Charitonian origin as well, as we have argued above (section 3.4), comes closest to the translator's colophon of SANF Parch. 66 in terms of specificity: in addition to the year according to three calendric systems, it also mentions the day of the week (*yawm al-ṭulātāʾ*), the saint's feast falling on this day (*ʿid Mārī Ġurġis*) and the Muslim month name (*Muḥarram*).

⁵³ Binggeli, "Les trois David."

⁵⁴ For a division of New Style and Early Abbasid scripts, which builds on Déroche, *The Abbasid Tradition*, takes as its point of departure the hand's overall extension (vertical vs. horizontal), see Hjälms, "Paleographical Study."

Parch. 24 and parts of SANF Parch. 36 are rather similar to the former two as well. SA 74 is normally dated to the ninth century CE, though in light of the similar hand in SG 34b, dated to 929/30 CE, one should not exclude a tenth century CE date for SA 74 as well. As mentioned above, one of the fly-leaves probably added to the codex during a rebinding process, apparently comes from a codex copied by the Charitonian scribe who also copied SA 75 (cf. section 3.5 above).

To conclude, in sharp contrast to the Charitonian colophons, which are all examples of the typical Christian take on Early Abbasid book hands with relatively little New Style influence, all Sabaitic hands exhibit more curvy scripts, with the notable exception of SANF Parch. 66. It is likely, but not decisively clear, that this colophon was copied at Saint Saba, as mentioned above. Whereas paleography speaks against such a place of production, its expressive formula speaks for it, as demonstrated above. In either way, we must presuppose a certain mobility between monasteries and workshops and thus variation in practice.

Though a division of the monasteries along Early Abbasid-inspired vs. scripts with clear New Style influence is surprisingly clear in our small corpus, one should remember that the Charitonian manuscripts are normally older than those we have from Saint Sabas. The latter were thus composed during a time when the more curvy, and soon also more plain (so-called Naskh) scripts, increased. In any event, distinct curviness in script may very well be a typical feature of the Sabaitic workshops of this time, even if not exclusively used there (it is also attested in David of Ashkelon's hand active in the Anastasis and in Sinai, see below) and not consistently so (cf. SANF Parch. 66 + LUB Cod. Gr. 2, if indeed Sabaitic).

5 COLOPHONS FROM SAINT CATHERINE

As mentioned above, Saint Catherine's Monastery has played a crucial role in preserving some of the earliest witnesses of the Christian Arabic literary heritage and the provenance of almost all of the manuscripts from which we have taken the source material for the present study is linked to this institution. The monastery was built in the sixth century CE by the Emperor Justinian. Pilgrim reports tell us that it was a multilingual setting from an early time on. Arabic-speaking monks must have been active there in the eighth century CE at the latest. The earliest dated Christian Arabic translation of a Greek text was carried out at Saint Catherine's in 772 CE. Treiger has argued that the "initial stages of this Christian translation activity can therefore be tentatively assigned to ca. 750 AD, perhaps even earlier. Mount Sinai must have been one of its early centers."⁵⁵ There are no copyists' colophons bearing such early dates, but from the set of Sinaitic colophons to be discussed below we can securely infer that several individuals were involved in the production of Christian Arabic manuscripts at Saint Catherine's Monastery at the turn of the 9th and 10th centuries CE. These scribes refer to their place of activity

⁵⁵ Treiger, "The Earliest Dated Christian Arabic Translation," p. 34.

simply as “Mount Sinai” (*Ṭūr Sīnāʾ*) or the “monastery of Mount Sinai” (*dayr Ṭūr Sīnāʾ*). It is often also called “God’s holy mountain” (*ǧabal Allāh al-muqaddas*) or “God’s holy dwelling place” (*mawḍiʿ Allāh al-muqaddas*). As pointed out above, Catherine of Alexandria became the monastery’s patron saint at the earliest in the 13th century CE, to a great part due to Western pilgrims. In the 9th and 10th centuries CE, the monks of Mount Sinai would have considered Mary their patron saint. Accordingly, Saint Mary (*Martmaryam/Mārtmaryam*) is invoked for intercession in three colophons (BMCL BV 69b, BNU Or. 4225a, SG 32, f. 409r).⁵⁶

1. BMCL BV 69b, f. 2r

Contents: hagiography, homilies, Bible; date: not specified (ca. 10th c. CE); scribe: Tūmā al-rāhib (Thomas the Monk).

2. BNU Or. 4225a, f. 226v

Contents: apothegms; date: 900/901 CE; scribe: Tūmā al-Fuṣṭāṭī (Thomas of Fustat).

3. BNU Or. 4225e, reverse

Contents: hagiography (?); date: damaged (904–912 CE); scribe: name illegible.

4. SA 116, f. 205v

Contents: Gospel lectionary; date: 984/5 CE; scribe: Yuḥannis al-qissīs.

5. SA 514, f. 160r

Contents: Hagiography, Bible (Job); date: not specified (early 10th c. CE); scribe: Tūmā al-Fuṣṭāṭī (Thomas of Fustat).

6. SANF Parch. 1, f. 1r

Contents: hagiography, homilies; date: not specified (ca. 10th c. CE); scribe: not specified.

7. SG 32, f. 408v

Contents: Greek Psalter; date: not specified (early 10th c. CE); scribe: Miḥāʾil al-qissīs tilmīḍ ambā Filūta (Michael the Priest)

8. SG 32, f. 409r

Contents: see above; date: see above; scribe: see above and below.

As in the previous cases, the Sinaitic colophons appear in manuscripts that transmit ascetic literature (BMCL BV 69b; BNU Or. 4225a; SA 514; SANF Parch. 1) and biblical books (BMCL BV 69b; SA 514 and SG 32). It is difficult to find any clear patterns in the Sinaitic material and the most intriguing question in this corpus is perhaps the relation between Thomas the Monk and Thomas of Fustat and the many manuscripts that can be attributed to hands similar to the three Tomaic colophons in the early Christian Arabic corpus. Also interesting is the relation between the Michael mentioned in SG 32 and the Charitonian deacon with the same name (cf. SANF Parch. 7).

⁵⁶ In BNU Or. 4225e, the legible parts give the names of Aaron and probably Moses who would also have been venerated on Mount Sinai.

It becomes instantly evident that none of the colophons in Sinai predate the ninth century CE and that several younger colophons are found here. Thus, based on our small dated corpus, it appears that prolific scribal activity, or at least the practice of dating colophons, during the long ninth century, slowly moved from Saint Chariton, to Saint Saba, and finally to Saint Catherine.

5.1 Formal Features

Most of the Sinaitic colophons have an average length of around ten to thirteen lines. But there are also very concise ones with just three or four lines. The shortest colophon in our whole corpus is the signature by Thomas of Fustat in SA 514, which is found at the end of the biblical book of Job and reads: “The story of Job the righteous was completed with the help of God. May God have mercy on the servant, the sinner who wrote it for Mount Sinai, God’s holy mountain. He is Thomas of Fustat, the sinner” (*tammāt bi-‘awn Allāh qīṣṣat Ayyūb al-ṣiddīq raḥīma Allāh al-‘abd al-ḥātī’ allaḏī katabahā li-Ṭūr Sīnā’ ḡabal Allāh al-muqaddas wa-huwa Tūmā al-Fuṣṭāṭī al-ḥātī’*).⁵⁷ The last word *al-ḥātī’* is even squeezed in on the last line of a densely written page, which means that this is everything but a carefully planned colophon. Thomas of Fustat’s colophon in BNU Or. 4225a makes a completely different impression. It takes up about half the page and is executed in red ink in order to make it visually distinct from the preceding text. The colophons in BMCL BV 69b and SANF Parch. 1 share an interesting feature: both are found at the end of the manuscript’s *pinax* or table of contents. SA 116 is a bilingual Greek-Arabic gospel manuscript and SG 32 a Greek Psalter with an Arabic scribal signature. Just as SG 34b discussed above (cf. section 3.1), SA 116 follows a two-column layout for the text. The Arabic colophon has its own column (left), but continues for three lines in the Greek column (right). Since the Greek colophon is substantially shorter than the Arabic one, the scribe supposedly intended this arrangement.⁵⁸ In SG 32, we find two colophons. As we shall argue below (section 5.5), there are certain indications that the second was not written by the original scribe of the codex. The first one is found at the end of a Greek text portion. The four lines in red and black-brown ink are carefully integrated into the decoration that formally ends the page.

When it comes to decorations, only SG 32 and SA 116 make use of this device. As just mentioned, the colophon of BNU Or. 4225a is set apart from the main text by means of different ink color, but no decorative elements are used except for a couple of line fillers in the form of short dashes in the last line of the colophon. For some reason, the scribe decided to write the closing three “amens” on the left side instead of the right one, as the directionality of Arabic script would suggest. In five

⁵⁷ SA 514, f. 160r:27–28.

⁵⁸ A transcription and English translation of the Greek colophon is provided in Galadza, *Liturgy and Byzantinization*, p. 368.

cases, however, the text of the colophon is not set apart visually from surrounding text portions. In SA 116, both the Arabic and Greek columns are interrupted by two horizontal lines, which consist of alternating red dots and black dashes. The lines are followed by a continuous black line on which are situated six black cross designs (four of the crosses are decorated with red dots). Then follows another line of red dots and black dashes before the two-column layout continues with the Arabic and Greek colophons. The decoration in SG 32 is much more elaborate. Beneath the Greek text portion a riband in braid design, similar to the ones employed in the Charitonian manuscripts SA 72 and SANF Parch. 7 is followed by three horizontally arranged cross designs, colored in red, which pick up the braid pattern and resemble Celtic knots, a design that can also be found in Coptic, Syriac, and even Hebrew manuscripts. The slings of these cross designs are coupled with geometric patterns in the form of spikes, which also turn up at the right and left side of the riband above. Other elaborate braid designs occur throughout the codex.

5.2 Functional Features

In the Sinaitic colophons the order of functional features is flexible, just like we have seen in the other two corpora. A new feature found so far only in the Sinaitic corpus is the use of the *basmala* to introduce a colophon (cf. BNU Or. 4225e and SG 32b). Also new in this corpus is the introduction of a declarative feature (a curse) into one of the colophon-like texts in SG 32 (cf. 5.4 below).

The Sinaitic workshop under our scope appears to have been established after those in Saint Chariton and Saint Saba, a conclusion based on the later dates we find in them. It might also be that Sinai had fewer professional scribes, such as Stephen of Ramlah and Michel the Deacon at Saint Chariton, and Anthony David of Baghdad and David of Homs at Saint Sabas, not to mention David of Askalon in Jerusalem. However, Thomas of Fustat/the Monk may have assumed a similar function.

All Sinaitic colophons include expressives, as usual in our corpus. BMCL BV 69b by Thomas the Monk and BNU Or. 4225a by Thomas of Fustat include the introductory phrase we identified as an allusion to Matthew 25:34 in the Charitonian colophons above (cf. section 3.3). They both invoke Mary and the holy ones/saints. The colophon of SA 514, penned by Thomas of Fustat, includes no such statements and neither does any other colophon from Sinai, save BNU Or. 4225e which references the “prophets” (*anbiyāʿ*) Aaron and Moses, very likely an allusion to the local veneration of these biblical figures. BMCL BV 69b and SANF Parch. 1 include several agents involved in the production, in a way typical of Sabaitic scribes (cf. section 4.2).

Ms.	Trans.	Text
BMCL BV 69b	(12) I ask our lord Christ to forgive the sins (13) <i>of the one who wrote</i>	(12) <i>wa-anā asʿalu say- yidanā l-Masiḥ an yaḡfira</i> <i>ḥaṭāyā</i> (13) <i>man kataba wa-</i>

	<p>and the one who read and the one who acquired and commissioned [this book] (14) and to give him [the commissioner] what he has given the righteous holy ones (15) and place him at his right [side] and make him hear the sound filled (16) with joy. And [so also invoke] for the scribe, amen, through the intercession of [our] Lady, (17) the Mother of Light, Saint Mary and all the holy ones, amen.</p>	<p>man qara'a wa-man iqtanā wa-istaktaba (14) wa-yu'tiyahu mā a'tā l-qiddisīn al-abrār (15) wa-yuqimahu 'an yamīnihi wa-yusmi'ahu al-ṣawt al-mamlū' (16) farağ wa-li-l-kātib āmin bi-ṣafā'at al-sayyida (17) umm al-nūr Martmaryam wa-ğamī' al-qiddisīn āmin.</p>
BNU Or. 4225a	<p>(15) ... May (16) Christ remember you in his kingdom and place you at his right [side] and [invoke] for him who read (17) and him who wrote and him who [commissioned it] through the intercession of Saint Mary and all the saints, (18) amen, amen, amen.</p>	<p>(15) ... ḍakaraka (16) al-Masīh fī mulkihi wa-aqāmaka 'an yamīnihi wa-li-man qara'a (17) wa-li-man kataba wa-li-man [istaktaba] bi-ṣafā'at Mārtmaryam wa-ğamī' al-qiddisīn (18) āmin āmin āmin.</p>
BNU Or. 4225e	<p><...> (5) your mercy shall reach me and your strength shall protect me. The admonitions of [Moses (?)] (6) and Aaron, your prophets, are redemption, mercy, and forgiveness <...> (7) and grace on your sinful servant ...</p>	<p><...> (5) raḥmatuka tanālunī wa-'izzatuka taḥūṭunī wa-wa'azāt [Mūsā (?)] (6) wa-Harūn anbiyā'ika ḥalāṣ wa-raḥma wa-mağfira <...> (7) ra'fa 'abdaka al-ḥāṭi' al-maḍnūb ...</p>
SA 116	<p>[left column] (9) Remember, o Lord, your servant (10) the sinner</p>	<p>[left column] (9) uḍkur yā rabb 'abdaka (10) al-ḥāṭi' Yuḥannis al-qissis ...</p>

	John the priest...	
SA 514	(26) ... May God have mercy on the servant, the sinner (27) who wrote it...	(26) ... <i>raḥīma Allāh al-‘abd al-ḥāṭī’</i> (27) <i>alladī kataba ...</i>
SANF Parch. 1	(18) ... May God have mercy on the one who wrote, <i>the one who commissioned</i> , <the one who > (19) read, and the one who listened and said “amen.”	(18) ... <i>raḥīma Allāh man kataba wa-man istaktaba</i> <wa-man > (19) <i>qara’a wa-man sami’a wa-qāla āmin.</i>
SG 32, f. 408v	(1) May God help you , my brother, and grant you understanding!	(1) <i>māla’aka Allāh yā aḥī wa-fahhamaka ...</i>
SG 32, f. 409r	And whoever comes close to the place, (14) may God respond to him and to whoever said “amen.”	(12) ... <i>wa-man qarubahu li-l-mawḍi’</i> (13) <i>istaḡāba Allāh minhu wa-man qāla āmin.</i>

As already mentioned above (section 4.2), half of the Sinaitic colophons lack directives. As for those colophons which do include directives, we find the same request addressing the reader not to forget the scribe and pray for him (BNU Or. 4225a, SA 116, SG 32, f. 408v).

5.3 Datation

Only three of the Sinaitic colophons are dated (BNU Or. 4225a, BNU Or. 4225e, SA 116). Like most of their Sabaitic confrères, the Sinaitic scribes use Hijra calendar datation. In BNU Or. 4225a, Thomas of Fustat only gives the Hijra year without month or day. Equally, John the Priest refers to the Hijra year in SA 116. Interestingly, however, he adds to the date of the copying of the manuscript also the year in which he became a monk (*tarāhaba*) at Saint Catherine’s monastery (roughly ten years prior to the copying). The datation of BNU Or. 4225e is difficult to assess owing to the fragmentary state of the folio on which the colophon is preserved. The scribe seems to have used a dual system at least with respect to month names, since he refers to a “month of the Greeks” (*šahr al-rūm*) and possibly also a “<month> of the Arabs” (<*šahr* > *al-‘arab*). The latter is then given as *Dū l-Ḥiḡḡa*, i.e. the last month of the Islamic calendar. The Hijra year is only partly legible, but the colophon was written in the 290s (i.e. between 904 and 912 CE). As pointed out by Jean Mansour, who deciphered most of the text of this fragmented folio, this means

that the datable activity of this scribe and of Thomas of Fustat is separated by a maximum of eleven and a minimum of three years.⁵⁹ Hence, the two persons very likely worked together in a scribal workshop.

5.4 Declarative Features in SG 32

Curses are Schiegg's prime example of declaratives, i.e. written speech acts that "try to act beyond themselves in a mysterious way," as he writes.⁶⁰ Early Christian Arabic colophons are not a typical place of curses. In our entire corpus, there is only one example (SG 32), which we shall discuss here. As we will see, the presence of this declarative feature strengthens the assumption that the paratextual unit is not a colophon proper, but rather belongs to another genre of scribal notations.

Curses occur in paratextual notes in the manuscripts of our corpus and were added at a later point in time. They reveal something about the handling of the books and, generally, function as a sort of equivalent to the modern-day library stamps. Arabic book curses also occur, for instance, in Syriac and Georgian manuscripts from the collection of Saint Catherine's monastery. A typical Sinaitic book curse (*cum* endowment note) is found, for instance, in the upper margin of BAV Ar. 71, f. 3v–4r and reads as follows: "This book was given as a bequest for the benefit of the monks of Mount Sinai to read in it in the church about the Fathers. No one has authority to take it from the church and whoever takes it from the church will be under eternal ban" (*hādā l-kitāb ḥubbisa 'alā ruhbān Ṭūr Sinā' yaqra'u fihī 'alā l-abbahāt fī l-kanīsa mā li-aḥad sultān yuḥriḡuhu min al-kanīsa wa-man aḥraḡahu yakūnu taḥta al-kalima al-azaliyya*). The same note, written by the same person, can be found in BMCL BV 69b, f. 2v, SANF Parch. 1, ff. 1v–2r, and SA 436, f. 3r (part of it is preserved in SA 155, f. 1). More elaborate curses were left by the tenth/eleventh-century CE Sinaitic bishop Solomon in a number of Saint Catherine's manuscripts. In comparison to the one just quoted, however, "Bishop Solomon's statements are uniquely elaborate (and terrifying!) in the Sinai collections," as Mark Swanson, who collected and studied Solomon's notes, observes.⁶¹ Other examples left in manuscripts by Sinaitic bishops have been collected by Samir Khalil Samir.⁶²

In SG 32, there are two colophons, both of which at first glance are authored by Michael the Priest. We shall comment on the paleographical peculiarities of both colophons in the next section. The longer of the two colophons is found on f. 409r and covers the whole page. The colophon includes typical assertive, expressive, and directive features. It is also richer in factoids compared to the first colo-

⁵⁹ Mansour, *Homélie et légendes religieuses*, p. XXII.

⁶⁰ Schiegg, "Scribes' Voices," p. 143.

⁶¹ Swanson, "Solomon," p. 106.

⁶² Samir, "Archevêques du Sinai au 13e siècle."

phon in that it provides the name of the commissioner, a certain Abba Zechariah the Shoemaker (ambā Zahāryā al-iskāf). The scribe specifies that the book is to be kept on Mount Sinai for the benefit of those “who climb the holy mountain” (*man tala‘a al-ḡabal al-muqaddas*). Georgi Parpulov notes that Zechariah was a colleague of Abba Nilus and that they and their two disciples practiced asceticism on the summit of Mount Sinai.⁶³ The scribe further prescribes that “it should be with the priest who is on the mountain and he gives it to the one who reads in it; he will take it from him and not give it to someone else [to have it] for himself” (*wayakūnu ‘inda al-qissīs alladī yakūnu fī l-ḡabal yu‘tīhi alladī yaqra’u fīhi ya’ḥuḍuhu minhu wa-lā ya’taḥiḍu aḥad li-nafsīhi*).⁶⁴ These provisions, which have themselves declarative force in that they determine the handling of the book, are paired with the following curse: “Whoever violates this or lends it, will not have forgiveness before Christ and will not have a share with Saint Mary, the mother of Salvation” (*fa-man ḥālafa hādā aw yuḡīruhu*⁶⁵ *fa-laysa lahu ḡufrān quddām al-Masiḥ wa-lā yakūnu lahu naṣīb ma‘a Mārtmaryam wālidat al-ḥalās*).⁶⁶ The basic structure of this curse is similar to those collected by Samir and Swanson or the ones found in the margins of the manuscripts in our corpus: it is formulated as a conditional and expresses a prohibition against a specific sort of action. The vocabulary, however, does not match that of other Sinaitic book curses. More importantly, as we have already highlighted, this is the only instance in which we have declarative features in an early Christian Arabic colophon. In other words, declarative features are not at all characteristic of the early Christian Arabic colophon corpus. An explanation that suggests itself is that this paratext was not authored by the original scribe of the manuscript, but by someone who used information of a now lost second colophon (since the commissioner is not mentioned in the first and there is no Greek colophon), or who was close enough in time to remember the involved parties, and added prescriptions and the curse typical of notes inserted by later caretakers of books. The impression that not Michael the Priest, but someone else is responsible for this text is corroborated by paleographic features to which we will turn now.

5.5 Paleographical Features

From the paleographical viewpoint, two main questions arise with respect to the colophons found in SG 32. The first concerns the question of whether the Charitonian scribe Michael the Deacon is the same person as the Sinaitic scribe Michael the Priest. The second concerns the relation between the hands of the two colophons in SG 32. Neither question is easy to answer, since the first colophon in SG

⁶³ Parpulov, *Byzantine Psalters*, pp. 79–80.

⁶⁴ SG 32, f. 409r:6–8.

⁶⁵ The Arabic text is un-dotted and reads *yu‘īruhu* “violate, disobey,” which may also be an option here, cf. Parpulov, *Byzantine Psalters*, p. 79.

⁶⁶ SG 32, f. 409r:9–11.

32 consists of only a few lines and, thus, offers only sparse material for comparison. In addition, we only had access to low-resolution black-and-white images of the second colophon of SG 32.

It appears that Michael the Deacon's hand in SANF Parch. 7 in general exhibits sharper angles than the hand of the first colophon of SG 32.⁶⁷ Both the first colophon of SG 32 and SANF Parch. 7, however, display a round form of *dāl/dāl*, and both use, and write, the word *tilmīd*, "disciple," in an identical way. This could strengthen the hypothesis that Michael the Deacon and Michael the Priest are, in fact, the same person. Yet, the question should remain open.

As noted above (section 3.5), inconsistency in certain letter forms is quite common, which is particularly clear in the second colophon where mixed forms of the *dāl/dāl* grapheme occur. In addition to the mixed forms, which may be a result of the second scribe looking at the earlier text when he wrote his own, the hand of the second colophon of SG 32 does not exhibit horizontal elongation (cf. the dimensions of *ṭāʾ*) and it is doubtful whether the colophons in SG 32 are written by the same hand. This observation would also be in accordance with the impression we gained above from the presence of declarative features in the second colophon of SG 32. Consequently, this paratext does not seem to have been written by Michael the Priest, though it is written in his name, and turns out not to be a colophon in the first place, but a scribal note similar to those left by Sinaitic bishops in other manuscripts of the collection.

A parallel case among the Sinaitic colophons, which is also worth discussing from the viewpoint of paleography, concerns BMCL BV 69b (and its *membra disiecta*),⁶⁸ BNU Or. 4225a, and SA 514 (and its *membra disiecta*).⁶⁹ Owing to the scribe's signature, we know that the latter two texts were copied by Thomas of Fustat. In the colophon of the first manuscript, the scribe calls himself "Thomas the Monk" and we might justifiably ask whether Thomas the Monk and Thomas of Fustat are the same person. The paleographic evidence seems to speak against this identification, at least when it comes to the colophon page of BMCL BV 69b. However, the relations between these manuscripts are rather complicated. Firstly, it appears that the scribe who copied the colophon in BMCL BV 69b is not the same as the one who copied the actual manuscript. As Peter Tarras argued elsewhere, the overall careless execution of the colophon page, which continues the table of contents, suggests that this is the product of a somewhat hasty restoration added to the manuscript at some later point.⁷⁰ In any event, it appears that one and the same hand

⁶⁷ This may be noted, for instance, in that the upper stroke of final *kāf* is placed almost in parallel with that on the baseline and supplied with a head serif in the former whereas it consists of a horizontal and a vertical stroke only in the first colophon of SG 32 (this shape of the letter does not appear in the second colophon).

⁶⁸ See van Esbroeck, "Remembrement."

⁶⁹ See Kessel, "A Catacomb."

⁷⁰ Tarras, "Building a Christian Arabic Library."

copied the main texts in both BMCL BV 69b and BNU Or. 4225a. In contrast, the production of SA 514 apparently involved more than one scribe. At least, we know from Thomas of Fustat's signature that he was one of the contributors. His handwriting has a slightly different appearance here due to the dense writing, i.e. his attempt at using as much as possible of the available space on the page. Still, typical features of his hand are at work, such as the archaic horizontal dotting of *šin* (next to the triangular arrangement), the mainly straight vertical writing of *alif* (sometimes still reminiscent of inverted-S-shaped *alifs*), or the peculiar execution of isolated *ġīm/hā'/hā'* whose tail is perpendicular with a minimal inclination towards the direction of writing.⁷¹ In general, all these manuscripts exhibit transitional scripts, i.e. vertically elongated letter shapes with more or less New Style curviness. The colophon page of SA 514 exhibits a rather plain script, whereas the handwriting in BMCL BV 69b and BNU Or. 4225a is a beautiful script with many New Style features, reminiscent of Anthony of Baghdad's slender hand.⁷² What appears to be the same hand is responsible for a large number of manuscripts. We count a total of 15 codicological units: 1. BMCL BV 69a; 1. BMCL BV 69b (+ CRL Ming. Chr. Ar. 93, CRL Ming. Chr. Ar. Add. 130, CRL Ming. Chr. Ar. Add. 148, CRL Ming. Chr. Ar. Add. 149, LUL Or. 14238 + SANF Parch. 47); 3. BNU Or. 4225a; 4. BSB Cod.arab. 1068; 5. CUL Or. 1287 (+ BESM Vitr. 41, BESM Vitr. 46, CRL Ming. Chr. Ar. Add. 124, Ming. Chr. Ar. Add. 150); 6. SA 457d (+ BAV Ar. 1826); 7. SA 457a; 8. SA 460 (+ SA 457c); 8. SA 461 (+ CRL Ming. Chr. Ar. Add. 141, CRL Ming. Chr. Ar. 147, SA 457b); 9. SA 514 (+ BSB Cod.arab. 1066, SC 579); 10. SA 516b; 11. SA 542; 12. SANF Parch. 1 (one of the scribes); 13. SANF Parch. 33; 14. SANF Parch. 46; 15. SANF Parch. 47.

This is not the place for a thorough examination of this vast material,⁷³ yet if Thomas of Fustat, probably to be identified with Thomas the Monk, is responsible for all the above manuscripts, he possibly had some sort of workshop around him, in which scribes would have been active with similar looking hands. These would have been responsible for parts of SA 514 and a number of further manuscripts, such as SANF Parch. 2, SANF Parch. 21, SANF Parch. 22, and SANF Parch. 56. The latter three share many features with Thomas of Fustat's hand but, for instance, the tail of final *mīm* slopes rightwards whereas as in Thomas' hand it slants leftwards. The hand who wrote the colophon and parts of the text in SANF Parch. 1 is not as delicate as Thomas of Fustat's hand and exhibits a rather straight script, on the verge of becoming a common Naskh. Still, Thomas of Fustat might have been responsible at least for one part of the codex.

⁷¹ For a more detailed discussion of these features, see Tarras, "Building a Christian Arabic Library."

⁷² For illustrations of the scripts, see e.g. Meïmarēs, *Katalogos*, pp. 74; 95. See also George, "Le palimpseste Lewis-Mingana de Cambridge," pp. 405–416; Sauget, "La collection homilétique-hagiographique"; Tarras, "Building a Christian Arabic Library."

⁷³ A more thorough study is offered in Tarras, "Building a Christian Arabic Library."

Our last example, SG 116, is a much later Greek-Arabic bilingual manuscript. Suffice it to say here that the Arabic script is rather peculiar, providing an overall angular impression reminiscent of early ninth-century manuscripts, but mixed with softer features, typical of traditional Naskh.⁷⁴

6 GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

6.1 Scribal Self-Representation

One of the most common elements of Christian Arabic colophons are expressions of self-depreciation.⁷⁵ This is also found in other Christian colophon corpora, as e.g. in the Sinaitic Georgian colophons, which were studied by Adam McCollum. As he points out, “scribal self-depreciation is not unique to Georgian, but a characteristic that spans the centuries of Christian scribal activity.”⁷⁶ Self-depreciation could be understood as an expressive feature, indicating religiously motivated self-perception, but it must, overall, be viewed as a formulaic element. In fact, in our corpus we find only one colophon in which the scribe speaks about himself without using any of the common self-depreciating terms (RNL Ar. N.S. 263). Here, we consider these terms as pertaining to written acts of scribal self-representation in early Christian Arabic colophons. They also include assertives such as the mention of personal names, sobriquets, descriptions of professions and ecclesial offices, places of origin, as well as hints at student-teacher relationships. These are all features that make colophons not only documentary sources, but also a sort of “ego-document.”⁷⁷

The most common self-depreciating term is *al-ḥāṭī*?, “the sinner.” It is normally found before or after the scribe’s personal name. In one case, the scribe inserts it between his first name (probably his monastic name) and his *nisba*: *Tūmā al-ḥāṭī al-Fuṣṭāṭī* (SA 514). In most cases, this term is coupled with one or more quasi-synonymous terms: *al-miskīn*, “the poor,” *al-ḥaqīr/al-bāʿis*, “the miserable,” *al-dānīb*, “the wrongdoer,” *al-madnūb/al-mudnīb*, “the culpable,” *al-ḍaʿīf*, “the weak,” *al-aṭīm*, “the wretched.” Some of these expressions are more elaborate, as e.g. *al-ḡāfil* ‘an *nafsihi*, “the self-negligent,” or *al-kaṭīr al-ḍunūb*, “the one full of trespasses.” One scribe calls himself *al-mutašabbih bi-l-ruhbān*, “the one who imitates the monks”

⁷⁴ It also exhibits certain similarities with other Greek-Arabic texts and is difficult to classify, see Hjälms, “Paleographical Study,” pp. 50n27.

⁷⁵ Troupeau, “Les colophons,” p. 227 has collected twelve different self-depreciating expressions some of which are also listed in the following. Those not represented in our corpus are: *ʿāḡiz*, *ḍalīl*, *faqīr*, *ḍamīm*, *šaḡī*, and *mardūl*.

⁷⁶ McCollum, “Notes and Colophons,” p. 116. See e.g. also Murre-van den Bergh, “I the Weak Scribe,” p. 23.

⁷⁷ On manuscript paratexts as ego-documents, see Zaki, “From Pilgrim to Resident,” pp. 245–246.

(SANF Parch. 40), which is probably to be understood as an expression of self-depreciation as well, in the sense of “the one who is so sinful as to only resemble a monk.” A less derogatory, but also little attested, expression is *al-‘abd*, “the servant.” Another way of expressing self-depreciation or at least humility is the phrase used by David of Homs: “I am in urgent need of that [i.e. the addressee’s prayers]” (*fa-inni ilā dālika muḏtarr*).

If the scribes mention their manuscripts’ commissioners, the attributes they use in addressing them are antithetical to the way in which they speak about themselves. For instance, David of Homs calls the commissioner of SANF Parch. 66: “Yannah the esteemed monk of the Laura of Saint Sabas” (*Yannah al-fāḏil al-rāhib fi siq Māri Sābā*)⁷⁸ and Thomas of Fustat calls the commissioner of BNU Or. 4225a “the gentle-hearted and <generous> father, distinguished in the faith in God’s true word, Abba Moses son of Ḥakīm, the priest of Aḏraḥ” (*al-ab al-wadi‘ <al-karīm> al-šarīf bi-l-imān bi-kalimat Allāh al-ḥaqq ambā Mūsā b. Ḥakīm al-qissīs al-Aḏraḥī*).⁷⁹

It must be assumed that most, if not all, of the scribes in our corpus were monks. Some of them expressly use the designation *al-rāhib*, “the monk,” as a sobriquet (or *laqab*), e.g. Thomas the monk (BMCL BV 69b).⁸⁰ The title “abba” (*ambā*) indicates the same. These elements also suggest that the personal names coupled with them are the scribes’ monastic names. Thus, Griffith argued, for instance, that “Anthony” is the monastic name of the scribe Anthony David of Baghdad, while “David” is his given name.⁸¹ As mentioned above, the Sinaitic scribe John the priest mentions in his colophon the date he became a monk (*tarāhaba*) at Mount Sinai. In some cases, the *laqab* provides information about the scribes’ (former) occupations: David of Homs is called “the carpenter” (*al-naḡḡār*). In three cases (SA 116, SANF Parch. 7, SG 32b), this element of the scribes’ names refers to ecclesial offices: *al-šammās*, “the deacon,” and *al-qissīs*, “the priest.” SANF Parch. 7 also mentions the office of *basilikarios*, i.e. someone in charge of the basilika.

Many names also exhibit patronymic elements (BL Or. 4950, BAV Ar. 71, SA 116). More importantly, however, is the scribe’s (or commissioner’s) *nisba*, which tells us something about its bearer’s place of origin or former main activity. In our corpus, this onomastic element provides the following geographic coordinates: Aḏraḥ, Baghdad, Damietta, Fustat, Homs, Ramla, Raqqa, and Tiberias. Together

⁷⁸ SANF Parch. 66, f. 4v:19.

⁷⁹ BNU Or. 4225a, f. 226v:11–13.

⁸⁰ Pachomius (Faḥūm), the scribe of SA 436 (f. 42v:9), uses the expression *al-musammā rāhib*, “the one who is called a monk.” This may either indicate self-depreciation or that he wore sobriquet *al-rāhib*.

⁸¹ Griffith, “Anthony David,” p. 10. In general, all personal names are identifiably Christian names, with sometimes peculiar orthography (e.g. *Bṭqr*, Victor, *Ssnh*, Sissinius). Non-typically Christian names occur among paronyms: e.g. Ḥakam, Ḥakīm. Some of the names are also used by Jews or Muslims: e.g. Mūsā, Sulaymān.

with the names of the three monasteries in the Judean Desert and in the Sinai as well as Jerusalem, our relatively small corpus yields an impressive amount of geographical information about early Christian Arabic scribal networks, allowing us to connect various places from Mesopotamia across Syria, Palestine, and Egypt. This means that Arabic-speaking Christians from a vast geographical area came together in the Palestinian monasteries and nurtured them with artisal skills, perhaps also books.

Another important component of the way in which scribes speak about themselves in colophons are student-teacher relationships, an element that adds to the socio-historical dimension of early Christian Arabic scribal culture. In our corpus, the scribe Michael the Deacon/the Priest, who, if the same person, was apparently active both at Saint Chariton and Saint Catherine, calls himself “student/disciple” (*tilmīd*).⁸² In SANF Parch. 7, penned at Saint Chariton, he calls his teacher al-Ṭabarānī, “the one from Tiberias,” and adds “the brother of the *basilikarios*” (*aḥ al-bāsiliqār*). It is not clear whether Michael himself or his teacher is this brother of the *basilikarios*. In SG 32, Michael’s teacher is called Abba Philotheus. Again, it is not certain whether Abba Philotheus is identical to al-Ṭabarānī, if Michael changed his master, or if Michael the Deacon and Michael the Priest are two different persons.⁸³ Interestingly, another Charitonian scribe, Stephen of Ramla, addresses the commissioner of the manuscript (BL Or. 4950), a certain Abba Basil, as his teacher (*mu‘allim*).⁸⁴ He also calls him “spiritual father” (*ab rūḥānī*). Both in the case of Michael and Stephen, we may, thus, deal with spiritual discipleship, but as the case of Stephen of Ramla shows, the scribes’ spiritual teachers could very well be involved in the process of manuscript production and encourage it. It is likely that by mentioning a recognized teacher or spiritual father, the scribe lends authority to his own work.

6.2 Manuscript Commissioning

Commissioners are mentioned by name in seven of our twenty colophons.⁸⁵ In addition, two colophons indicate that the manuscripts were produced for internal use (SA 116, SA 514), while another two colophons refer to an act of commissioning in the *expressive* part (BMCL BV 69b, SANF Parch. 1). Hence, in our corpus it is more common than not that the scribe explicitly addresses manuscript commissioning, which in most cases must have been the initial impetus for the manuscript’s pro-

⁸² Cf. Treiger, “Palestinian Origenism,” p. 64n71.

⁸³ We are grateful to Alexander Treiger for sharing his thoughts on the issue with us.

⁸⁴ Cf. Griffith, “Stephen of Ramlah,” pp. 43, 45.

⁸⁵ These are: ambā Basīl (BL Or. 4950), Sissina al-rāhib al-Ḥimṣī (SA 75), Ishāq al-rāhib (BAV Ar. 71, RNL Ar. N.S. 263), ambā Yannah b. Iṣṭafan al-Faḥūrī al-Raqqī (SANF Parch. 66), ambā Mūsā b. Ḥakīm al-qīssis al-Adraḥī (BNU Or. 4225a), ambā Zaḥaryā al-iskāf (SG 32).

duction. There are basically three ways of expressing manuscript commissioning, either by use of the verbs *istaktaba* (“he commissioned”) and *iqtanā* (“he acquired”)⁸⁶ or by means of the phrase *kataba li-* (“he wrote for”). The latter is used, for instance, in SA 514 where the commissioning party is simply identified as Mount Sinai. Here, the case may be similar to that of SA 116, another manuscript produced at Mount Sinai, in which we read that the scribe “wrote [this book] for himself and for the one who reads in it after him” (*katabahu li-nafsihi wa-li-man qara’a fihi ba’dahu*).⁸⁷ It may also be similar to what we read in the Sinaitic colophon of SG 32, where the commissioner is named, but the colophon reads “and let the one who comes to the holy place [i.e. Mount Sinai] after him read in it, [i.e.] the one who climbs the holy mountain and reads well” (*wa-šāra li-l-mawḏī‘ al-muqaddas man ba’dahu yaqra’u fihi min ṭala’a al-ḡabal al-muqaddas man yaḥsunu yaqra’u*).⁸⁸ In any event, manuscript commissioning was not always an economic act, but sometimes certainly a pious one, just as the production of the manuscript itself. Unfortunately, we are generally poorly informed about the economic circumstances of early Christian Arabic manuscript production and manuscript notes have not been systematically studied in this respect. As for the material analyzed here, there is no indication of whether any of the commissioners mentioned by name paid for the production or even the material involved in the production.

Some information can be adduced from outside the colophon corpus. SANF Parch. 3 has preserved an acquisition note, which cannot be discussed in detail here. But it seems to attest to an event in which two Siniatic monks bought the manuscript in Jerusalem.⁸⁹ Swanson has studied the manuscript notes of the tenth/eleventh-century CE Sinaitic bishop Solomon.⁹⁰ They also testify to monetary transactions in acquiring manuscripts. Moreover, the monetary value of manuscripts must have necessitated Solomon’s prohibition against selling (*bā’a*) books.⁹¹

6.3 Expressions Related to Manuscript Production

In our corpus, a number of expressions also refer to the process of manuscript production. First of all, the scribes refer to themselves and their activity with the expression *kātib* (no other designations for “scribe” are attested in our corpus). The word, more generally, designates the profession of both manuscript copyists and

⁸⁶ SA 72 also attests to the use of the participle *muqtanin* (“acquirer”). Cf. also Gacek, *Arabic Manuscripts*, p. 176 who lists *iqtanā* among the verbal forms denoting possession. Both *istaktaba* and *iqtanā* occur in BMCL BV 69b, which suggests that commissioning and acquiring may refer to different agents, e.g. a commissioning person and an acquiring institution.

⁸⁷ SA 116, f. 205v:12–13.

⁸⁸ SG 32, f. 409r:4–5.

⁸⁹ The note is transcribed in Meïmarēs, *Katalogos*, p. ١٩ n^Λ. We are grateful to Alexander Treiger for bringing it to our attention.

⁹⁰ Swanson, “Solomon.”

⁹¹ Cf. Solomon’s note in SA 2; Swanson, “Solomon,” pp. 94–95.

secretaries.⁹² In our larger corpus, we come across one scribe whose father's occupation was secretary.⁹³ Some famous Christian scholars, like the Syrian Orthodox philosopher and apologist Yaḥyā Ibn 'Adī (d. 974 CE), earned their living as professional copyists and book dealers.⁹⁴ Professional manuscript producers and sellers were, of course, active in different social settings. But we cannot exclude that the scribes of early Christian Arabic manuscripts, even though mostly active in a monastic milieu, entertained relations to the book market and its agents in more urban centers (e.g. Damascus or Jerusalem). As we have seen above, some scribes also assembled other artisanal skills, like David of Homs, who was a carpenter (the commissioner of SG 32b was a shoemaker).

Related to the expression *kātib* is the verb *kataba*, most commonly used to designate manuscript copying, and *kitāb*. Next to *muṣḥaf* ("volume"), *kitāb* is the most common term designating the manuscript copy. However, it must be noted that in some cases, *kitāb* does not refer to the product of the copying process, i.e. the book, but designates the copying process itself (BL Or. 4950, SA 75, possibly SANF Parch. 1). In SA 436, one of the manuscripts in our larger corpus, we also find the verbal noun *katb*, parallel to *nash* (cf. BMCL BV 47, BNU Or. 4226a). If we compare our findings to those of Troupeau whose corpus, however, includes only one 10th-century CE manuscript (all others 13th through 16th centuries, 24 % Melkite),⁹⁵ the vocabulary used to designate the activity of manuscript copying widens in later centuries. Though the verb *kataba* is also most often represented in his corpus, scribes also used the expressions *naqala*, *'allaqa*, and *saṭṭara* (*nasaḥa* appears only once). Expressions like *bi-ḥaṭṭ* ("in the handwriting of") do not occur in our smaller corpus and only once in our larger corpus (SA 436), but they are frequent among Troupeau's samples (other similar expressions are: *'alā yad*, *bi-yad*, *min yad*, and *bi-qalam*).

The verb *istaktaba* ("he commissioned") derives from the same verbal root as *kataba*, *kitāb*, and *katb*. In a sense, the juxtaposition of *kataba* and *istaktaba* directly mirrors the social context of manuscript production, i.e. the relation between scribe and commissioner. Other persons involved in handling the manuscript are invoked in the *directive* part of the colophons: the *tarḥīm* formulas, starting with *raḥīma Allāh* ("may God have mercy"), mention readers (*man qara'a*) and listeners (*man sami'a*) next to scribes and commissioners. In our larger corpus, there is one instance where also the activity of dictating (*amlā*) is mentioned (BL Or. 5008). This highlights that at least two persons were involved in the production of the manuscripts, namely someone who read out loud an earlier example of the text and another person who wrote down what they heard. This is the sort of prototypical workshop scenario often assumed in the critical assessment of the quality of texts

⁹² Déroche et al., *Islamic Codicology*, pp. 185–188.

⁹³ SA 4, f. 281r:8: Ġibrā'īl b. Mūsā (al-ma'rūf bi-)Ibn Ḥylm (?) al-Kātib.

⁹⁴ Cf. Endress and Ferrari, "The Baghdad Aristotelians," p. 440.

⁹⁵ Troupeau, "Les colophons."

preserved in manuscripts. However, we have only scarce evidence, if at all, that this is what early Christian Arabic manuscript production *normally* looked like in the Palestinian monasteries.

7 CONCLUDING REMARKS

This study has primarily examined formal and functional features in early Christian Arabic colophons, which are related to the monasteries of Saint Chariton, Saint Saba, and Saint Catherine. In particular, we have been interested in establishing trends in the corpus, from which we may glean insights into the socio-intellectual milieu of early Christian Arabic manuscript production as well as in establishing typical features or practices used in the various workshops. The latter may also be used to further investigate the origin of the many early manuscripts that lack colophons and other paratextual elements.

Although there are exceptions to the rules, we have established some trends in our corpus. The earliest colophons, i.e. those produced in the 9th century CE, are connected to Saint Chariton. Typical of these colophons are the use of multiple calendars (Byzantine, Seleucid, and [other] Alexandrian World Eras, as well as the Hijra calendar have been detected), as well as a widespread practice of incorporating a quotation from Matthew 25:34 into the expressive and/or directive parts of the colophons. In addition, the scripts used in these relatively early Christian Arabic manuscripts are all representatives of “Christian” Early Abbasid hands with comparatively little influence from the more curvy features of New Style scripts. In contrast, manuscripts composed at the monastery of Saint Saba are with few exceptions New Style scripts. Another interesting trend in the Sabaitic corpus is the mention of at least three agents involved in the manuscript production in the expressive part of almost all colophons (scribe, commissioner, reader etc.). In contrast to the practice found in dated Charitonian manuscripts, most of the Sabaitic colophons use only the Hijra year when accounting for the year of completion. In that sense, they are similar to the colophons produced at Sinai. In general, the Sinaic corpus is more complex than the other two corpora and no clear trend that set most of their colophons apart from other scriptoria was found. Based on the dates in our corpus, it appears that the production of manuscripts slowly moved from the two monasteries in the Judean Desert to Sinai and that scribal practice was less standardized there. This may partly be a result of monks moving from one monastery to another where they continued their scribal activity. Several recent scholars have correctly pointed out that a large number of manuscripts were produced around the figure Thomas of Fustat, who may or may not have been the same person as Thomas the Monk. Though we cannot tell much from the rather diverse colophon material, it may well be that the many manuscripts exhibiting the beautiful script with many New Style features found, for instance, in BMCL BV 69 and BNU Or. 4225, belonged to Thomas and that more simple scripts which reflect the overall transitional style of the former but not its distinct curviness, belonged to other scribes in the same workshop. In addition, the writing support easily affects the style of writing,

which may explain the somewhat different handwriting found in SA 514, which bears Thomas' signature.

Whereas Schiegg's categories served our corpus very well, it should be mentioned that declarative aspects, such as book curses, are not reflected in any proper colophon in our material. Such a formulation appears in only one colophon. Yet, on paleographical grounds there is reason to think that this colophon was reproduced by a later scribe and rather belongs to another kind of paratext, similar to later added endowment notes, where such curses are common.

The study has also shown that early Christian Arabic scribes followed the same practice of self-depreciation that we find in other Eastern Christian corpora. We have also seen that it was more usual than not to mention the commissioner's name in the colophon, which indicates that manuscripts were often copied on demand, rather than produced in hope that they would later be sold or traded. Finally, the word most often used when relating to the production of a manuscript at this time was *kataba*. Other options existed, yet the diversity we often find in later colophon material, is not extensively attested in the early corpus.

The present study has by no means been exhaustive and much work remains to examine the material in greater depth. Not all of Schiegg's categories have for instance been attended to. In addition to the paleographical study included here as a means to add an additional level of information to the colophons' larger context, other codicological aspects, such as quire marks and the number of folios included in a quire, are still to be examined. In addition to the documentary evidence that can be gleaned from colophons, paleography and codicological practices will surely further our understanding of early Christian Arabic workshops. Most importantly however, the colophons in our study were restricted to those which more or less explicitly mention one of the three most famous centers in the area. In the future, findings in this study must be carefully analyzed within the larger colophon corpus and eventually also with later dated material. Nevertheless, we hope that the present study will encourage further study into this important manuscript material, where colophons, along with codicological and content related studies, will help us reconstruct and better understand the worldviews, practices, and social-intellectual milieus of Christian Arabic communities.

APPENDIX: MANUSCRIPT SHELFMARKS

Note that in the following, the use of lowercase letters (a, b, c ...) after call numbers signifies that more than one codicological unit is preserved under one shelfmark and refers to its place in the present manuscript, e.g. BNU Or. 4225e refers to the fifth codicological unit preserved under the shelfmark BNU Or. 4225.

BAV Ar. 71 = Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Ms. Vaticanus Arabicus 71

BAV Ar. 1826 = Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Ms. Vaticanus Arabicus 1826

BESM Vitr. 41 = Beuron, Benediktiner Erzabtei Sankt Martin, Ms. Vitrine 41

BESM Vitr. 46 = Beuron, Benediktiner Erzabtei Sankt Martin, Ms. Vitrine 46

- BL Or. 4950 = London, British Library, Ms. Oriental 4950
 BL Or. 5008 = London, British Library, Ms. Oriental 5008
 BMCL BV 47 = Bryn Mawr, Bryn Mawr College Library, Ms. Special Collections BV 47
 BMCL BV 69a = Bryn Mawr, Bryn Mawr College Library, Ms. Special Collections BV 69(a)
 BMCL BV 69b = Bryn Mawr, Bryn Mawr College Library, Ms. Special Collections BV 69(b)
 BNF Ar. 6725c = Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Ms. Arabic 6725(c)
 BNU Or. 4225a = Strasbourg, Bibliothèque nationale et universitaire, Ms. Oriental 4225(a)
 BNU Or. 4225e = Strasbourg, Bibliothèque nationale et universitaire, Ms. Oriental 4225(e)
 BNU Or. 4226a = Strasbourg, Bibliothèque nationale et universitaire, Ms. Oriental 4226(a)
 BNU Or. 4226b = Strasbourg, Bibliothèque nationale et universitaire, Ms. Oriental 4226(b)
 BSB Cod.arab. 1066 = Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Ms. Codex arabicus 1066
 BSB Cod.arab. 1068 = Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Ms. Codex arabicus 1068
 CRL Ming. Chr. Ar. 93 = Birmingham, Cadbury Research Library, Ms. Mingana Collection Christian Arabic 93
 CRL Ming. Chr. Ar. Add. 124 = Birmingham, Cadbury Research Library, Ms. Mingana Collection Christian Arabic Additional 124
 CRL Ming. Chr. Ar. Add. 130 = Birmingham, Cadbury Research Library, Ms. Mingana Collection Christian Arabic Additional 130
 CRL Ming. Chr. Ar. Add. 140 = Birmingham, Cadbury Research Library, Ms. Mingana Collection Christian Arabic Additional 140
 CRL Ming. Chr. Ar. Add. 141 = Birmingham, Cadbury Research Library, Ms. Mingana Collection Christian Arabic Additional 141
 CRL Ming. Chr. Ar. Add. 147 = Birmingham, Cadbury Research Library, Ms. Mingana Collection Christian Arabic Additional 147
 CRL Ming. Chr. Ar. Add. 148 = Birmingham, Cadbury Research Library, Ms. Mingana Collection Christian Arabic Additional 148
 CRL Ming. Chr. Ar. Add. 149 = Birmingham, Cadbury Research Library, Ms. Mingana Collection Christian Arabic Additional 149
 CRL Ming. Chr. Ar. Add. 150 = Birmingham, Cadbury Research Library, Ms. Mingana Collection Christian Arabic Additional 150
 CUL Or. 1287 = Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, Ms. Oriental 1287
 LUB Cod. Gr. 2 = Leipzig, University Library, Ms. Codex Graecus 2
 LUL Or. 14238 = Leiden, University Libraries, Ms. Oriental 14238
 RNL Ar. N.S. 263 = Saint Petersburg, Russian National Library, Ms. Arabic N.S. 263

- SA 1 = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic 1
 SA 2 = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic 2
 SA 4 = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic 4
 SA 72 = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic 72
 SA 74 = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic 72
 SA 75 = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic 75
 SA 116 = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic 116
 SA 155 = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic 155
 SA 309 = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic 309
 SA 431 = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic 431
 SA 436 = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic 436
 SA 457a = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic 457(a)
 SA 457b = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic 457(b)
 SA 457c = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic 457(c)
 SA 457d = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic 457(d)
 SA 460 = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic 460
 SA 461 = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic 461
 SA 514 = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic 514
 SA 516b = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic 516(b)
 SA 542 = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic 542
 SC 579 = Oslo/London, Martin Schøyen Collection, Ms. 579
 SG 32 = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Greek 32
 SG 34a = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Greek 34(a)
 SG 34b = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Greek 34(b)
 SANF Parch. 1 = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic New Finds Parchment 1
 SANF Parch. 2 = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic New Finds Parchment 2
 SANF Parch. 3 = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic New Finds Parchment 3
 SANF Parch. 7 = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic New Finds Parchment 7
 SANF Parch. 14 = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic New Finds Parchment 14
 SANF Parch. 16 = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic New Finds Parchment 16
 SANF Parch. 21 = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic New Finds Parchment 21
 SANF Parch. 22 = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic New Finds Parchment 22
 SANF Parch. 24 = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic New Finds Parchment 24
 SANF Parch. 33 = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic New Finds Parchment 33

- SANF Parch. 36 = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic New Finds
Parchment 36
- SANF Parch. 40 = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic New Finds
Parchment 40
- SANF Parch. 46 = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic New Finds
Parchment 46
- SANF Parch. 47 = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic New Finds
Parchment 47
- SANF Parch. 56 = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic New Finds
Parchment 56
- SANF Parch. 66 = Sinai, Saint Catherine's Monastery, Ms. Arabic New Finds
Parchment 66
- St. Andrews 14 = St. Andrews, St. Andrews University Library, Ms. 14

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THE LITERARY AND LANGUAGE VALUE OF THE ARMENIAN COLOPHONS

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INTRODUCTION

The rich information found in Armenian manuscript colophons mean that they have always provided and continue to provide relevant material to researchers in various fields. At the same time, these written monuments are rightfully considered to be important sources for Armenian history, because they contain reliable information not only about important historical events, but also about daily life, as well as customs and traditions. Sometimes this information is so detailed that it is simply impossible to find similar references in any other chronicle. The following formulation of Garegin Hovsepyan, a prominent Armenian philologist, church figure, and Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia (1867–1952 AD) is the most accurate in this context.

“The four main sources of the history of Armenia and the Armenian people are: Armenian historians, foreign historians, epitaphs and colophons of manuscripts.”¹

Moreover it is worth emphasizing that the historical information recorded in the colophons is very often related to the neighboring peoples too as well as other peoples with whom the Armenians interacted over time. Taking into account the significance of these handwritten sources, first of all, from the point of view of history, as early as the 19th century, various researchers tried to assemble and group the colophons in separate collections (rev. Ghevond Pirghalemyan, rev. Garegin Srvantzyanc et al.). For the same purpose, in the 1950s, the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of Soviet Armenia initiated the collection and publication

¹ Yovsēp'ean 1951, xxviii.

of Armenian colophons, which was later continued in Matenadaran named after Mesrop Mashtots in Yerevan.²

As a result of these scientific publications, today researchers have access to 12 volumes of Armenian manuscript colophons, which are separated by centuries and with some exceptions they contain colophons from the 5th to the 17th centuries.³ According to preliminary data, in order to publish all the material of these written monuments, about 10 more volumes will be required. Now, preparatory works are being made for collecting them.

Having all this under consideration, perhaps it is no exaggeration to say that the Armenian has the richest colophon tradition of any language – 8 out of 10 Armenian manuscripts (about 80%) contain large and small colophons.⁴

Such an amount of colophons and their sheer volume are truly impressive, especially when we consider the quantitative data of other manuscript traditions.⁵ If we leave aside the notes of the scribes in the free parts of the manuscript, including the small, mostly one to two-three lines notes in the margins about the manuscript production, about everyday difficulties, and focus on the end of Armenian manuscripts, where, traditionally, a colophon called *glxavor* “main” was written, which could take up from one to five or even more pages.⁶ In terms of content, the “main” colophon stands out for its rich information on the passage of time, historical figures and events, everyday life, and the imitation of the manuscript. Sometimes the scribes record all this in a unique style and language, creating interesting artistic images, and writing colophons in verse (fig. 1).

In this article, we will try to summarize and evaluate the main literary and linguistic features of these written sources.⁷

LITERARY VALUE OF THE ARMENIAN COLOPHONS

As the above-mentioned statistics prove, the tradition of writing colophons was quite stable and widespread throughout the Middle Ages. At the same time, it should be noted that ancient Armenian colophons with dates appear already in the second half of the 9th century, and these written monuments with their basic structure undergo very little changes in the later centuries. In the Gospel of 887 known as “Lazaryan” (fig. 2) the main structure of the Armenian colophon, as well as the template expressions, which are almost invariably found in later written records,

² Sanjian 1969, 3–7, Sirinian 2014, 67–71. For more details see Harut’yunyan 2019, 15–36.

³ For the bibliography of published and unpublished volumes see Harut’yunyan 2019, 332–38.

⁴ Sirinian 2014, 65.

⁵ Harut’yunyan 2019, 46–52.

⁶ Harut’yunyan 2019, 62–83.

⁷ We discussed language features in more detail in our recently published study, see Harut’yunyan 2022.

are already noted.⁸ With these common features, typical structure and similar stylistic expressions, colophons grow into an original literary genre and are often examined as specific literary units.⁹

This should be considered natural, because the number of creative and literate scribes in the Armenian manuscript tradition is huge, who, not being satisfied with the already widespread stereotyped expressions, and various ready-made linguistic structures, tried to give an artistic touch to their speech for making it more influential and inspiring. Achieving this goal, the scribes used various expressive stylistic means in their colophons: adverbs, metaphors, comparisons, exaggerations, epithet, allegories, paraphrases, etc. which hold the researchers' attention. They regularly switch from narrative essay to verse, composed with rhymes. Let's consider all the above-noted with examples and their analysis.

In 1389 the scribe Karapet, applying figurative and allegoric expressions and other interesting literary motifs in his colophon, tried to emphasize the destructive consequences of the brutal invasions of the enemy who intruded into the country, to make his speech more impressive. First of all, he started his written speech with an appeal to readers, which is more characteristic of epic works. "Now, brothers and believers in Christ, hear about the plague of wrath that has come upon us." Then follows in the essay the details of this scourge of destruction and murder, in which the scribe tries to impress the readers with heartrending words. In order to clarify the number of victims, he resorts to exaggeration (hyperbole) as well as sarcasm. Here is what Karapet writes:

"The beasts were fulfilled with satisfaction; the birds were bored to death, the wolves wondered whose meat they would eat: patriarchs or priests, deacons or church clerks, hermits or highlanders?"¹⁰

Most often, the scribes resort to exaggeration not only to mention the details of the terrible scenes, but also to emphasize their level of barbarism. Here is an example, in the colophon of the Gospel copied 1236, where the scribe, describing the appearance of the Mongols¹¹ and the atrocities committed by them, inscribes: "And they were so merciless that if I get an fiery tongue, I can't tell about the details of the sufferings."¹² According to the scribe, his words will not be enough to describe the atrocities.

⁸ Mat'evosyan 1998, 21–26, Sirinian 2014, 75–77, see also Chapter 5 in Harutyunyan 2019, Sirinian 2022, 91–120.

⁹ Baxč'inyan 1980, 15–64, Sirinian 2014, 72–74, Harut'yunyan 2019, 287–306.

¹⁰ HayJerHiš XIV, 577–579.

¹¹ Cfr. Dashdondog 2011, 43–55, Pogossian 2012, 180.

¹² HayJerHiš XIII, 196.

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յիշէլ և զիմ աղիպողութիւնս արտոնաբուն զի մեղքն զքառսերեցեալ տորդ
 Եւ արժանի արա աղէն մի զբեր ընդունել զաղջնանց որ զիմ և շնորհեաւ ըն
 Թորութեանց իմաց և բժշկեաւ զբացմանս ինկ վերս հոգւոյ իմոյ Եւ արբեաւ
 արունկով կարեկցեալն զիմ արա մեղաց իմաց Ով էր որդիքի մի անբաւ
 Ժանեղի զոր ինտնիս իմ և որ ըմ երկիր պարանեմ Ով տր կէնաց և մահու
 Ով առաւել ինտանկալու պարստեղծութեանց քան անստեղծութեանց
 արժանի արա զմեղ զանեն մասին սրբոյն որք սրբութեան արեցին զբեղ և
 շնորհեաւ մեզ ազարթութեան անեղ բեղ ի գալաւեն զբում և համր ձկութե
 կալ առ թէ փառաց անտոյն քո Եւ սոր մեզ զորով մարդս իրքի լեզ զերու
 նաւեա բարբուն և թէ եկաք միջի հոր իմոյ Ժանեղեղ զպարստեղ ձեզ
 զաղբայրին Որով և զմեզ արժանի արապեաւ տր մեր և փրկիցէ յիմքս
 Երբեզ ընդ հոր և անենաւք հոգւոյդ փառք պատիւ և եղանակ ի և երկիր
 պարսութի և անեղ փայտը ի միջի և միջի և յաւտեան յաւտեանց և ձեռն

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Յիշատակարանէ ստոր գորցաւ
 ստոր պատիւ գոհութիւն հանրերն զո հարանակն երկրորդ
 էին միացնոյ արարողն գոյնց բոլորեց յան էնց եղերց հոր և
 որդւոյ և տր հոգւոյն յաւտեանց յաւտեանս ամեն Ընտնորք բա
 րիք և պարզեք կատարեալք ինկերուստեն իջեալ առ ի հորեն բազ
 որտայ անի առաջապէս և ոչ նախատե բառնն և թէ ինդրեցեք և
 ապցի ձեզ բախեցէք և բացցի ձեզ զի որ ինդրէ առնու և որ բախե բաց
 ցի նաւ Որ և ինդրմանէ բազմա ձեր շնորհաց սք հոգւոյն ընկէլ յանձնեալ
 զառ ինկերուստ իջեալ իմաստեի որ միջո զվերինն տայ խորհել որքննտն
 կարապետն մեր ընդ յաջմէ նոյ Եւ ոչ զայս որ յաշխարհի աստե



Ս ըն յիշելով զանկարուն և զանցաւոր զփառս աղխարհին և փառագեղով
 անանց և ինտն իջեաւոր կէնացն յաւտեանկանացն և լեծ րաբունեի և
 Ընտնարան լինաս լարրապետն յանթեցի և բան այն ստացաւ զմք
 դիրքս կաթողիկեաց և օթից Թղթոցն մեկնութե զոր և իք վրդոյն
 հայոց Լարրիս մեկնեալ եղաւ բնոյ զր և անոր ժ բանիդ ոչ նրբարչն
 շաղթք և ոչ ըստ գեղձուկ բառիւ կամ բայիւ այլ արբունական միջ
 նաչաւիլ գնացիւք բաղցրաբարբառ պատմաբանութե զոր էտ զը
 րել զմք դիրքս լինաս լարրապետն յանթեցի յիշատակ հոգւոյ

Fig. 1. Matenadaran, ms. 1370, 391r, 1687 AD.

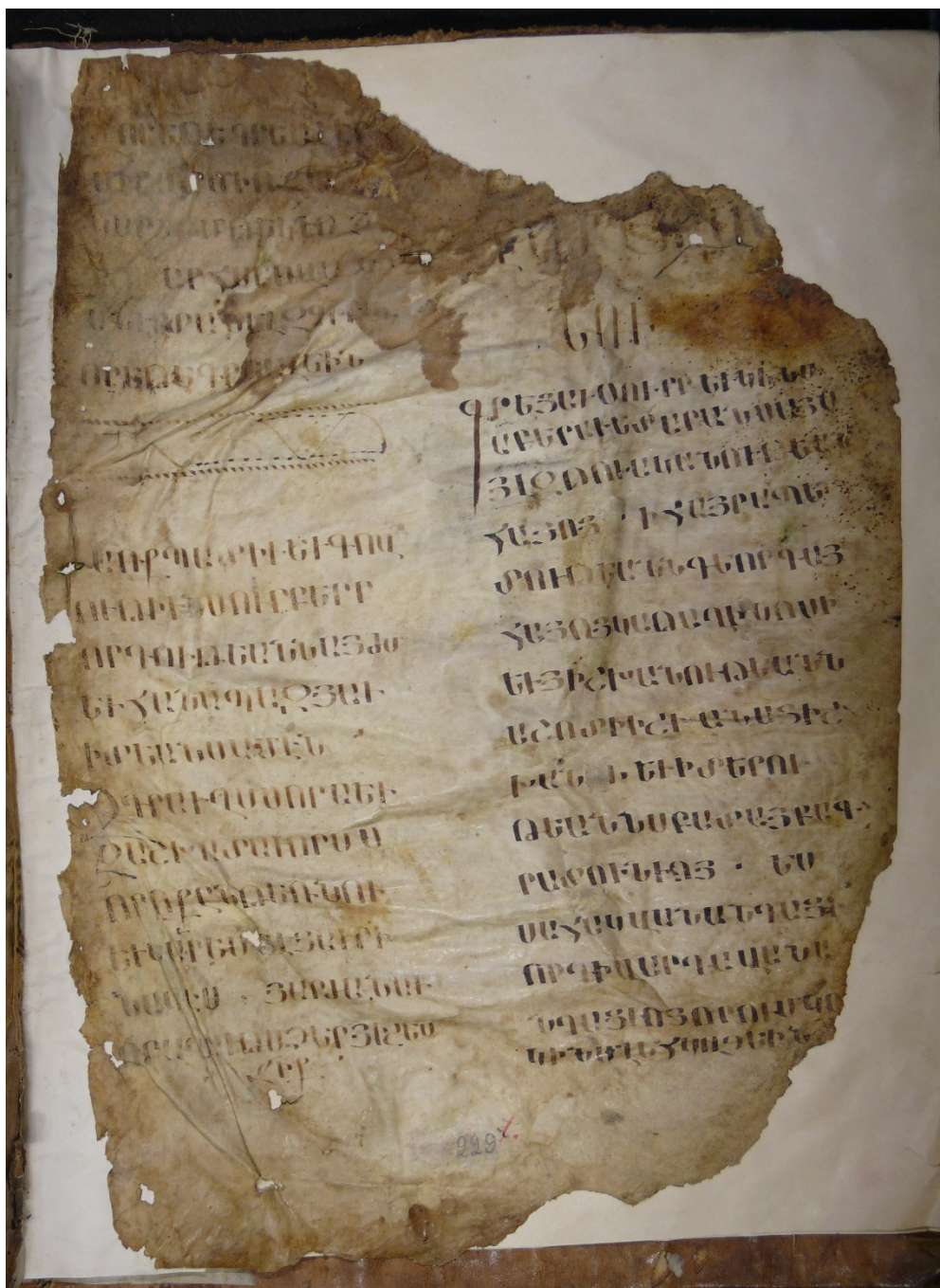


Fig. 2. Matenadaran, ms. 6200, 229r, 887 AD.

It is noteworthy that this illustrative thinking found its expression in many Armenian manuscript colophons. Principally avoiding the detailed description of severe scenes, the scribes recorded like this:

“And who dare tell about the confusing disasters?”,¹³ “Who dare tell about the disasters that fell in our city?”¹⁴ Here is another one: “And now, even if my entire nation becomes a storyteller, it cannot talk about the troubles of our time that came upon the Armenian nation.”¹⁵

The speeches of the scribes contain many comparisons, which can sometimes be quite contradictory. A wide variety of phenomena can be selected for comparison. For example, in order to emphasize the caring attitude of Vardan the priest, the 14th century scribe Step’anos draws an interesting comparison between Vardan and the bird taking the chicks under its wings. This is what Step’anos writes. “Like a bird takes its chicks under its wings and cherishes them in its bosom, so he (Vardan the priest – Kh. H.) gathered us and took care of all our needs.”¹⁶

Another scribe, with a special descriptive or figurative imagery and a parallel draw, mentions that the art of writing is not gifted to everyone. He compares an untrained scribe with an unskilled butcher who kills the animal incorrectly and spoils the meat.

“Just as it is impossible to put birds under the yoke and make a furrow, or to make oxen to fly, so without working hard on this (manuscript – Kh. H.) no one can achieve the great art of writing. And whoever dares, cannot write the truth, but will spoil and distort the writing like an ignorant cook or like a butcher who does not know how to separate the joints, and unskillfully separates the meat from the limbs.”¹⁷

With the purpose of stylizing the speech and condensing the impressions, some scribes in one sentence also applied to the frequent repetition of the same consonant sounds (aliteration). Without translation, we bring an example below in which we only have highlighted the cases of the use of the letters q “g” and շ “š”.

“Greca’w gerarp’is ays, geragoyñ, gerakatar, geralur ew gerayzanc’, gelelašēj ew gelec’kaynuag, gerunak imastiwk’ hogwoyñ ergel zgovest Errordut’eann. Astuacabašx šnorhiw šnorhaworeal šnorhagic surb Awetarans”.¹⁸

In order to praise and honor the manuscripts copied by themselves, the most beautiful phenomena of human life, ideals, beloved teachers, spiritual brothers, and

¹³ HayJerHiš XIII, 891.

¹⁴ HayJerHiš XIVa, 29.

¹⁵ HayJerHiš XIII, 689.

¹⁶ HayJerHiš XIVa, 46.

¹⁷ HayJerHiš XIV, 426–427.

¹⁸ HayJerHiš XIVa, 213.

to express good attitude towards them figuratively and metaphorically the scribes of colophons often used various adverbs: *erāhraš ew hogiazard Awetaran* “three-miracle and soul beautifier Gospel”,¹⁹ *k’ristosahimn, arak’elašēn, margarēaxōs ays girk’* “this Christ-based, apostle-built, prophet-speech book”,²⁰ *astuacahačoy, srbasund ew srbagorc k’ahanay* “God-pleasing, consecrated/hallowed/ religious, sacramental priest”²¹ and so on.

Special attention is paid to the metrical colophons. It is no exaggeration to say that a significant part of them are endowed with artistic characteristics and written due to the rules which are specific to this very literary genre.²² Predominantly the rhymed colophons stand out and the number of metrical colophons based on the principle of acrosticism excels where the initials of the lines contain the names of colophons’ scribes or the names of the manuscript receivers. It is noticeable that rhymes are also found in other manuscript cultures,²³ however only in Armenian manuscript colophons are they so frequent and common and exceed with their contrasting sizes. Oxford University Prof. Theo M. Van Lint’s study shows that since the 13th–14th centuries the number of Armenian metrical colophons has steadily increased over time, and in the 17th century reached its peak from the point of view of quantity.²⁴ A typical sample of the above mentioned can be found below:

A poem of 88 assonance verses that rhyme with the ending – ի “i” is inserted in the colophon of the manuscript of 1284 copied by the scribe Mat’ēos (i.e. Matthew) at the Monastery of Aghberts (Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia) from which we present a segment:²⁵

¹⁹ HayJerHiš XVb, 196.

²⁰ HayJerHiš XVa, 249.

²¹ HayJerHiš XIV, 357.

²² Č’atyan 2018, 82–95.

²³ An example of a rhyming colophon written by an Italian scribe in the 15th century:

“Per Gesu Cristo ti prego lettore
 Che vogli lui con affetto pregare
 Per la salute del compilatore
 Il qual ridusse in rima per volgare
 E se del nome suo nascesse errore
 Per questo modo si puo dichiarare
 Che Domenico fu da Monte Chiello
 El monco zoppo pova vecchiarello”.

See Du Bouveret 1965, 430 (no. 3461).

²⁴ Van Lint 2016, 81.

²⁵ The Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia was an Armenian state entity that existed in the eastern part of the Mediterranean basin in the years (1080/) 1198–1375, which, due to its geographical location, had an essential impact on the political, military, cultural, and economic transitions of the time. For more details see Сукиасян 1969, Dédéyan 2003, Mutafyan 1988, 2002, 2012 etc.

Ayl ew imoy anaržani
 Hogwoy zawak inj elic'i,
 Ork' ant'erñun and yateni,
 Yišman ařnen zmez aržani,
 Eress ankeal artasueli,
 Merjakayic'd K'ristosi,
 Xošorut'eans mi lic'i
 Trtunj i jēñj annereli.²⁶

“And may this be for me the unworthy [scribe]
 Son of my soul,
 Who would read [my colophon] at the time
 May they remember us,
 Fallen on the ground with tearful face against the floor,
 The believers in Christ,
 Because of the large sizes [of the scripts]
 May you not judge me unforgivably.”

The examples noted above illustrate the way in which the authors of colophon were not confined to scribal details. Most of them possess creative skills, and are capable of making up various novelized images, new words, and idioms.

In one of the famous writing centers of the Vayots Dzor Province in the northern part of Armenia, in Gladzor, at the end of the colophon of the Gospel copied in 1314 by the scribe Poghos there is a metrical verse where with the initials of its successive lines the name of the recipient of the manuscript is read: TĒR SARGSI Ē AWETARANS²⁷ “This Gospel belongs to the Reverend Sargis”.

Curses and blessings occupy a special place in Armenian colophons, which were most often written in order to keep the manuscripts away of being damaged; stolen and sold. Curses aimed at not erasing the records themselves and not destroying them are also common in the colophons. It is noteworthy that the scribes were especially responsive to this last phenomenon, because they specially recorded their names and others scribes' names in the colophons, hoping to be mentioned in the book of life as well.²⁸

Among the most common curses are the abomination of the 318 patriarchs participating in the First Council of Nicaea in 325 AD, threats to be erased from the book of life, to share the fate of the fratricide Cain or the betrayer Judas. And in their blessings, the scribes mostly ask for longevity and mercy from God for all who preserve or care for the manuscript. In a colophon written in 1307 we read: “If anyone dares to steal this (i.e. manuscript - Kh.H.) or sell it or pawn it or remove it

²⁶ HayJerHiš XIII, 553.

²⁷ HayJerHiš XIVa, 253.

²⁸ Petrosyan 2018, 215–228, Sirinian 2017, 277–292, Harut'yunyan 2018, 188–194.

for any reason out of the Church of the Holy Mother of God in Aghtamar,²⁹ let him be removed from the mercy of Christ and let him receive the share of Judas and those who crucified [Christ], whoever he may be, both vicar and layman, both male and female.”³⁰

Here is another one: “Now, let no one dare to take this from the door of it (i.e. the church – Kh. H.)” If one dares, let him receive the punishment of Cain, the share of Judas and those who crossed Christ, amen. So be it, let it be.”³¹

This curse is addressed to those who will erase the colophons: “Whoever erases or removes this record from this book, let him be erased from the book of life.”³²

Another scribe asks for God’s blessing for those who follow his advice: “Let those who do what is written in the book be blessed by God, amen”.³³

Of course, formulas of curses and threats to those who damage the manuscripts can be seen in Syriac,³⁴ Coptic,³⁵ Hebrew³⁶ and other manuscript traditions as well, but considering the total number of Armenian colophons and the curses and blessings appearing in them in various styles and purposes, it can be said that they have their unique place in the latter. That is why these kinds of manifestations specific to the literary genre have also received special attention from specialists.³⁷

It is considerable that curses or blessings were written in Armenian colophons on other occasions as well. In particular, curses addressed to enemies, invaders and tyrants and the blessings addressed to fighters against enemies, people’s defenders or beloved people can form separate groups which are sometimes distinguished by an extensive and unique way. As a sign of gratitude, the scribes also bless those who have done favors for them, praise their supporters and even the one who gives a glass of water.³⁸

Summarizing the characteristic features of this literary genre, we must mention that even though colophons very often leave the impression of a template structure, many scribes have come out of these templates and endowed their com-

²⁹ Aghtamar Monastery with its churches is located on the island of the same name in Lake Van and has been one of the largest spiritual and cultural centers of Armenians for centuries. It has been inhabited since ancient times, and reached its rise especially in the 10th century when it turned into the center of the Armenian kingdom of Vaspurakan. In the same period, the central Holy Cross Church of the monastic complex was built here, which is still standing today and is located in the territory of modern Turkey. For more details see Der Nersessian 1965, Vardanyan 2017, T’umanyan 2019, 14–184.

³⁰ HayJerHiš XIVa, 120.

³¹ HayJerHiš XIII, 57.

³² HayJerHiš XIII, 801.

³³ HayJerHiš XIII, 140.

³⁴ Brock 2001, 259.

³⁵ Soldati 2018, 118.

³⁶ Beit-Arié 1995, 504.

³⁷ Harut’yunyan 1975, 101.

³⁸ For more details see Harut’yunyan 2019, 277–286.

positions with different artistic images. In some cases, the scribes also artistically represent their everyday life. And sometimes they stand out for their evaluative and even critical views on political events.³⁹ Accordingly the individual scribes can justly be examined as creative individuals or authors. It should be noted that many of these scribes were also distinguished by their language skills, and the usage of remarkable language structures, which have attracted the attention of researchers as well.

LINGUISTIC FEATURES OF ARMENIAN COLOPHONS

Linguistic studies of Armenian colophons show that this genre of writing over the centuries not only formed its own unique structure and patterns, but also established its own language of the genre, which is old Armenian (most famously known as Grabar), in which the scribes of different eras traditionally tried to write colophons.⁴⁰ That is why, regardless of the time and place of writing, Armenian manuscripts often stand out at first sight by their seemingly uniform structure, writing language and style, scribal vocabulary, frequently repeated words and phrases. However, this impression changes when a proper linguistic examination is done.

Based on the data collected as a result of our research,⁴¹ we can note that despite the linguistic tradition of the genre,⁴² not all scribes were able to write their colophons in an unerring manner. This phenomenon directly emphasizes the linguistic knowledge of the latter, which is influenced by the historical, socio-political transitions of the time and, of course, the colloquial language and different dialects. In some cases, some of those who wanted to write a colophon even turned to other people to write it for them and on their behalf, because they did not master the genre specifics of the colophon or did not have sufficient language skills. In other words, some simply avoided writing a colophon with mistakes or dialectical elements. For example, on behalf of the later buyer (reverend T'oros) of the Gospel copied in 1502, reverend Xač'atur wrote a colophon in 1571 asking to remember him as well.⁴³ Earlier, in the 14th century, a certain priest named Sargis wrote a colophon on behalf of the recipients of another copied manuscript Yakobos and his wife, addressing to his readers with a request to be remembered too and asked their forgiveness for his mistakes.⁴⁴

It is noteworthy that even the involvement of other scribes for the writing of the colophons did not completely resolve the desire to remain close to the language of the genre. As a result, the Armenian colophons present important linguistic ex-

³⁹ Sirinian 2016, 28–36.

⁴⁰ Hovsep'yan 1997, 11, Ĵahukyan 1997, 7.

⁴¹ For the bibliography see Harut'yunyan 2019, 341–343.

⁴² Harut'yunyan 2022, 19–30.

⁴³ Gušakean 1961, 36.

⁴⁴ HayJerHiš XIVa, 456.

amples and facts from the point of view of the study of the history of the Armenian language, due to which the examined written monuments have always been in the limelight of Armenian linguists. Without going into detail about various linguistic issues, here we consider it necessary to highlight the most characteristic aspects of the linguistic materials provided by the colophons.

a. Vocabulary of colophons. It's notable that in the colophons of Armenian manuscripts, linguistic patterns, various similar expressions, which are an integral part of the structure of this written genre, are quite common.⁴⁵ Moreover, as studies show, medieval Armenian colophons also had their own special forms, which served as a guide for the scribes. One of the best examples of this can be found in a manuscript copied in 1476 that preserves a colophon-like guide. Only the place names and the names of the scribe, receiver or spiritual leaders of the time are left out from it, which should be filled in by the scribe of the colophon.⁴⁶ In other words, in the form of handwritten records, we are mainly dealing with a literary genre which is completely established and has its own structure and widespread linguistic patterns. However, as we have already mentioned above, many scribes have come out of these accepted templates and presented a creative approach to their essays, creating interesting literary-artistic images. All this was also expressed in their vocabulary. Hundreds of scribes created new words and stylistic structures in their colophons in accordance with the word formation laws of Armenian language, which were later noticed and included in the dictionaries related to different stages of the history of the Armenian language.⁴⁷ The statistics allow us to say that the word material extracted from these written sources in the Armenian dictionaries exceeds 3000 words in total. If we keep in mind that not all the colophons are yet published and familiar to linguists, and on the other hand, we have managed to find about 1,000 new words⁴⁸ in the already published volumes, then it can almost be said with certainty that the authors of the colophons have enriched the Armenian vocabulary in total with over 5000 words or word variants.

Such data is not known to us from other manuscript traditions, and this phenomenon is worthy of special evaluation. In fact, we are dealing not only with individuals with a certain literary taste and indescribable way of thinking, but some of them are also real wordsmiths. Here are just a few newly discovered words that are not yet recorded in Armenian dictionaries:

Aratagir	“written in abundance”
Bazmeḡkeli	“very miserable, wretched”
Zmaylasēr	“humor loving, fun loving”
Imastap’ap’ag	“yearning for wisdom, lover of meaning”

⁴⁵ Sirinian 2014, 76–85, Van Elverdighe 2017, 1–8.

⁴⁶ Harut’yunyan 2016, 49–50, for more details see Harut’yunyan 2019, 200–204.

⁴⁷ Harut’yunyan 2017, 157–174.

⁴⁸ Harut’yunyan 2022, 257–261.

Mełsabarj
Šnorhanerk

“taking sins upon himself”
“painted with graces, gifted”

No less valuable are the words used by the authors of the colophons, which are known with unique examples from the Armenian literature and are evidenced in the works of various authors. This allows us to assume that the scribes who used these words were quite well-educated, were familiar with the given bibliographic works and were influenced by their vocabulary. If we leave aside the Bible, by which the scribes were influenced mostly and very often made relevant citations⁴⁹ in their written language, then according to the number of used words of author, the most influential author is the prominent ecclesiastical figure of the end of the 10th and the beginning of the 11th centuries, the cosmic priest Grigor Narekatsi with his “Book of Lamentation”.⁵⁰ It is known that the famous priest used more than 700 new words in his poem,⁵¹ such as: *alētakoc* “painul”, *xrt’nacacuk* “hidden, secret”, *k’ristosahačoy* “pleasing to Christ” and others. Most of these words are not found later in other books, and here we find more than a dozen of them in colophons written at different times. It is more than clear that the scribes were directly influenced by this author’s famous poem.

The usages of dialects and borrowed words in the colophons are of special importance, which are the written witnesses of the living speech of the time. In this way we learn about the usage of those words in the exact place and time, which is so necessary for historical lexicography. Borrowings from Persian, Greek, Syriac, Arabic, Georgian, Latin, Italian, French, and Turkish can be found in Armenian colophons, which are the most vivid indicators of intercultural and, above all, interlinguistic relations. From this point of view, the study of personal names attested in the colophons also provides wonderful material.⁵²

Examining the vocabulary of Armenian colophons reveals many other interesting manifestations as well, and perhaps we will not be mistaken if we say that among the linguistic features of these written monuments, the study of vocabulary is the most significant. Detailed research in this direction is still a desideratum.

b. Grammatical and syntactic features. No matter how much the authors of the colophons tried to be close to the Grabar, to follow the latter’s language rules, however, especially in matters of grammar and syntax, deviations were often recorded, which can be explained on the one hand by the relatively low level of literacy and mastery of the Grabar by the authors of the colophons, and on the other hand, it is evident from the time influence of vernacular language and dialects in their language.

⁴⁹ Harut’yunyan 2019, 261–276, Van Elverdinghe 2021, 141–162.

⁵⁰ T’amrazean 2008, 49–605.

⁵¹ A’rak’elyan 1975, 42–43.

⁵² Weitenberg 2005, 265–273, Harut’yunyan 2018, 187–217.

Very often the scribes themselves mentioned the mistakes and apologized to readers for their language mistakes. For example, the above-mentioned priest Sargis apologized for the full-size letters and errors in his text, reasoning of being delusional and complaining about the surrounding noise.⁵³

Some of the scribal errors and mistakes are of great interest to linguists, who thus get the opportunity to explain the changes and patterns occurring in the language at the given time. Moreover, it is evident that the highest number of grammatical or syntactical errors is observed in the small notes left by the scribes in the margins of the manuscripts, which are more spontaneous in nature, in contrast to the main colophons written at the end of the manuscript, which are well developed, edited and proofread before being written in the manuscript. For example, the main colophon of a manuscript copied in 1303 by the scribe Daniël Ałt'amarci (Daniel of Aghtamar) is written in Grabar, while on the different pages of the same manuscript one can see small notes in typical grammatical forms of contemporary colloquial language with the structure of indicative present with the particle *łm*, construction of the plural with the endings *-łn* or *-łłn*, formation of the participle with the ending *-uð* etc., which are already characteristic of the Middle Armenian language period following the Grabar.⁵⁴ Here is one of those colophons: *Awał, zays šok's u zčančers zač'k's ku hanen*⁵⁵ "Alas, this heat and the flies are taking my eyes out." Here is another interesting small note, written by the scribe Zak'eos in 1474 in one of his copied pages of Haysmavurk' (i.e. Menelogy) in one of the scriptoria of Vayots Dzor region, in the southern part of Armenia, *Grum i, mukn c'et'ec' i veray lusanc'in*⁵⁶ "I was writing, the mouse peed on the margin." In this short sentence, the form "զրռւս" is very valuable with its composition of the imperfect.⁵⁷

Without going into all the grammatical details, let's note that these written monuments in this regard are of great interest and provide rich material for the study of the history of the Armenian language.

SUMMARY

In the Armenian handwritten culture, colophons played a significant role. It is worth mentioning that although the colophons have formed their own unique structure and various linguistic patterns over the centuries, many scribes have not limited themselves to these patterns and have authored their own unique colophons, which stand out with literary images, interesting and unique word usage, etc. That is why these written monuments take the limelight for philologists, both as a unique literary genre and as a rich source for linguistic studies.

⁵³ HayJerHiš XIVa, 456.

⁵⁴ Karst 1901, Ačarean 1951, 226–254.

⁵⁵ HayJerHiš XIVa, 39.

⁵⁶ HayJerHiš XVb, 358.

⁵⁷ For more details see Ant'osyan 1972, 305.

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IN COLOPHONS AND MARGINS OF THE SYRIAC LITURGICAL MANUSCRIPTS

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Syriac Christian scribes produced many liturgical manuscripts which contained prayers and texts of rites, but these manuscripts also sometimes include numerous notes, written either by the scribes themselves, or by other non-scribes who used these codices over several generations. This paper will focus on these colophons and marginal notes, especially non-scribal marginalia which can belong also to the larger category of ‘colophons,’ and their documentation of Syriac social history centered inside the life of the praying community.

Syriac liturgical manuscripts (MSS) are not only distinguished by their rich diversity of texts (many of these texts are still unedited and even unidentified), but also include colophons and marginal notes which provide important historical records that inform us about events, dates, names of places and persons, families, the life of the church community in different periods of time, records of endowments, wars, refugees, migrations, conflicts, letters, pandemics, and other significant details. This preliminary study on colophons in Syriac liturgical MSS will focus on the importance of these MSS in the daily life of the Syriac communities. Since these MSS were kept inside churches (centers of Syriac community life) and were accessible to the public, it is not surprising to find non-liturgical notes that are a source for understanding the social history of the Syriac people.¹

* I would like to express my gratitude to Robert A. Kitchen for his reading and suggestions.

¹ For some literature about employing the use of Syriac colophons in studying history, see: S. Brelaud et al (eds), *Le calame et le ciseau: colophons syriaques offerts à Françoise Briquel Chatonnet*, Paris 2021; S. P. Brock, “Fashions in Early Syriac Colophons”, *Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies* 18:2 (2015): 361–377; H. L. Murre-van den Berg, *Scribes and Scriptures: The Church of the East in the Eastern Ottoman Provinces (1500–1850)* Louvain: Peeters, 2015; D.

Study of the colophons and marginalia notes in Syriac liturgical MSS raises questions: what is the content of these notes, and the reasons for finding them as fragmentary texts with diverse length and written in inconsistent ways? Who were the writers of these notes, and how did they present and add such notes to liturgical MSS designed for praying? Why did these writers record specific notes in liturgical MSS rather than document independently the important information contained in the notes? There is a need for a comprehensive database that collects these colophons and marginalia notes to systematically trace the diverse layers of the notes: their style, writers and chronological dates. For this study, examples were taken from several liturgical manuscripts to understand these questions and suggest some preliminary conclusions.

CONTENT

A great deal of the content of the colophons found in the Syriac liturgical MSS includes basic ‘metadata’, similar to what can also be found in Syriac MSS in general. That is to say, the name of the scribe (sometimes with genealogical details about the family), the place (the village, the city and country and possibly some information about political or historical events that took place during the process of writing the MS), and the date (in general, the date of finishing the scribal work, but it can include in some cases the date of starting the work and several dates which accompanied the process of writing the texts of the MS). In some colophons, information may conflict and not necessarily be presented in a consistent or logical order. The scribe, when reaching this part of the MS, feels freedom to express himself (or herself in some cases, though rarely). Concluding lyrical and metrical lines confirms this tendency. In a famous example, the scribe and the MS are given the metaphor of the sailor and the ship in metrical lines. As the sailor rejoices when his ship arrives at the port, so the scribe rejoices when he writes the final date or colophon *أصعلا ونبلا ببحسنا: ومصعبنا الله العبدانا: مع نبلا فلهنا: اتمنا وشدت* (see for instance CFMM 00569, f.220r).² One of the terms for a colophon in Syriac is *ܥܘܡܢܐ* (cf. the 12th century MS from the collection of the Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate collection: Dam. 12/15 = SOP 359, f.480r), the same liturgical word used often in Syriac liturgical Anaphoras, especially in the Anamnesis Prayer and the Institution Narrative.

Wilmshurst, *The Ecclesiastical Organisation of the Church of the East, 1318–1913*. CSCO 582, Subs. 104. Louvain: Peeters, 2000.

² For a larger discussion on this kind of colophons see: S. Brock, “The scribe reaches harbor”, *Byzantinische Forschungen* 21 (1995), 195–202 (repr. in *From Ephrem to Romanos. Interactions between Greek and Syriac in Late Antiquity* [1999], ch. XVI). See also: A. C. McCollum, “The Rejoicing Sailor and the Rotting Hand: Two Formulas in Syriac and Arabic Colophons, With Related Phenomena in Some Other Languages”, *Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies* 18:1 (2015): 67–93.

Of course, there is always a question of how reliable and precise are these colophons and marginal notes, and if they can indeed be treated as historical documents. Nevertheless, the same question may be asked when dealing with any historiographical record, since elite or professional historians have written history from their own perspectives. The historiographic materials presented in some of the colophons can bear the testimony of a certain scribe who would not necessarily be skillful enough to write history, but is this not reason to give even greater regard for the authenticity of the information transmitted such a colophon or marginalia – they express the writer’s testimony with the simplicity of an eyewitness to the events documented.

The case of the Shḥimo (the Daily Office) MS from the Church of the Forty Martyrs in Mardin (CFMM 01099) is a good example.³ Although this late 19th-century MS does not bear in itself any specific liturgical importance, its lengthy colophon gives important historical details about the Syriac Orthodox community during the crucial period of the late 19th century, especially concerning the massacres of 1895 (known to scholars as Sayfo I).⁴ The scribe who wrote this lengthy colophon (19 pages!) likely did not plan to make it a historical document, rather he wanted to write some words in memory of Patriarch Peter III (now known as ‘Peter IV’), whose death happened while the scribe was finishing this liturgical MS for the Church of Mar Michael in Mardin, where the scribe used to pray (as he mentions in the colophon). Since the scribe was the secretary of Patriarch Peter III, he could include in his account some specific information, such as the new privilege for the Syriac Orthodox community of being an independent Millet which was approved by the Ottoman Sultanate, and would no longer be under the authority and at the mercy of the Armenian Orthodox Patriarchate. The scribe, at a later stage, when Patriarch Abdelmassih became the successor, wrote his appendix naming it as “Tarikh ܐܘܨܝܗܘܬܐ, i.e. History”, which is actually another term for ‘colophon’ in Syriac.⁵ The writer of this lengthy colophon tells the reader about the conflict of the Patriarchate after the death of Patriarch Peter III, and the historical complexities of that time. The scribe mentions several reasons why Patriarch Abdelmassih was the best candidate for this highest office; although the laity in Mardin were in favor of another candidate, Bishop Abdallah. The colophon’s short chronicle ends in July 1899. In fact, after some years, Patriarch Abdelmassih was deposed at the order of

³ The text of this Garshuni-Arabic colophon with its translation and a commentary are provided in *Literary Snippets: A Colophon Reader*.

⁴ See for example, G. Kiraz, *The Syriac Orthodox in North America (1895–1995): A Short History*, 2019, 1. The 1895 massacres are termed ‘Sayfo I’ to distinguish them from the massacres of ‘Sayfo II’ in 1915.

⁵ For the use of the word “ܐܘܨܝܗܘܬܐ” in referring to colophons, see for example: Dolabani, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts in Syrian Churches and Monasteries*, Damascus 1994, 108–111. Also, see Barsoum, *Makhtūtāt deir al za‘farān* [Manuscripts of Zafaran Monastery], Damascus 2008, 26.

the Ottoman Sultanate, and the new Patriarch was Bishop Abdallah. This example shows how such colophons might inform and record, without the need for later revision or an editing process as will usually happen with classical works of historiography.⁶

Although it is difficult to judge the accuracy of colophons and marginalia notes, especially when differences are noted comparing them with official rulings upon which the colophons are based, these notes were not intended to be placed inside the MSS as if they were diplomatic documents. Sometimes notes inserted in Syriac liturgical MSS do transmit unique information, and may be the only testimony for certain historical events. A good example is the 16th century Synod at the town of Hattackh.⁷ The only textual testimony about this Synod can be found surprisingly at the beginning of a lectionary MS, which was formerly in the Zafaran Monastery Collection under the shelfmark no. 12, and today is in the collection of the Church of Forty Martyrs under the shelfmark no. 41. The original rulings of this Synod are lost, and we only know about this Synod from remarks by the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch Aphrem Barsoum in his famous book: *The Scattered Pearls*.⁸ Barsoum talked about this Synod, as he had seen it in the lectionary MS Zafaran no. 12. The complexity of Barsoum's note is due to the fact that it was written before many MSS from the Zafaran collection were moved to the Church of Forty Martyrs in Mardin, which resulted in giving new numbers to those MSS. It was a perplexing process to trace the fate of the MS that Barsoum mentioned in a footnote. Thanks to Barsoum's catalogue of Zafaran's MSS, one knows more details about what he had described as a Zafaran MS. Barsoum's description included his comments on unique miniatures such as one miniature depicting Jesus giving communion to the Apostles. This narrows the possibilities in checking a lectionary MS with a miniature of such a description, and the account of the Synod of Hattackh was finally found! This example shows the importance of these inserted notes – this one saved the memory of a lost official text, even though it is not an official ruling. Barsoum also tells us how this MS survived the massacres of Sayfo I⁹ in 1895 which targeted the Christians in Diyarbakir and its suburbs (as we read in the previous example of the colophon-chronicle: CFMM 01099), such as the village of Mallaha, whose peo-

⁶ For more discussions about the importance of using archives and other original sources in Syriac historiography for studying the period of the Ottoman time, see: Kh. Dinno, *The Syrian Orthodox Christians in the Late Ottoman Period and Beyond: Crisis then Revival*. Gorgias Eastern Christian Studies 43. Piscataway, New Jersey: Gorgias Press, 2017.

⁷ E. Ishac, "The Synod of Mart Shmouni / Hattackh 1576", in *Corpus Christianorum Conciliorum Oecumenicorum Generaliumque Decreta 5/1: The Councils of the Church of the East*, Turnhout (in press).

⁸ I. A. Barsoum, *The Scattered Pearls: A History of Syriac Literature and Sciences*. Translated by Moosa, Matti. Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2003.

⁹ G. Kiraz uses the terms Sayfo I for the 1885 massacres and Sayfo II for the 1915 genocide in *The Syriac Orthodox in North America*, chapters 1 & 3.

ple threw this Lectionary MS into a water well to hide it from the invaders. Later, after the massacre, Patriarch Abdelmassih came to the village and rescued this MS from the water well. He cleaned it, and had it restored and rebound. It was moved later to the collection of the Patriarchal library of the al-Zafaran Monastery. In fact, Barsoum collected this peculiar piece of information from the marginal notes of this lectionary. A similar colophon is found in MS CFMM 1099.

In the previous examples, the content of these colophons and marginal notes included historical narratives (such as the Mardin Shḥimo MS: CFMM 01099), and some rare canonical materials (such as the Hattackh Synod of 1576). One further significant piece of information can be added, this time about the documentation of the endowments for the community. The lectionary of the village of Ṣadad near the city of Homs has one of the best examples. The pages at the beginning and the end of this MS lectionary contain notes about the rights of properties, fields, other details of agricultural life in the village of Ṣadad during different periods. Perhaps the most important notes are about the canons of marriages that took place. There are even copies of encyclical letters about the decisions of the Synod which took place in Mardin in 1521.¹⁰ This Synodal piece, found in a colophon at the end of a liturgical manuscript for the rites of blessing the wedding, is only known from Charfet manuscript no. 8/16, dated to 1682. The Ṣadad lectionary notes were written in 1523, only two years after the Synod of Mardin. It is the oldest testimony to that Synod. It seems that issues regarding marriages between relatives in the same village were common, so the notes were added to the lectionary – the authoritative Holy Book for the community – for easy reference. The lectionary book in the Syriac Orthodox tradition is placed on a wooden stand called *Ḥolḡoṡḡa* (i.e., Golgotha), in the middle of the altar, and every faithful member of the community kisses and takes a blessing from this Holy Book every time they enter and leave the church.

The attached encyclical note in the Ṣadad lectionary includes signatures by the hierarchies of the Syriac Church – patriarchs, maphrians and bishops – confirming the decisions of Mardin Synod of 1521. Is this lectionary peculiar in attaching this non-scribal note to this liturgical book, or was it a common practice to include the church canons with the liturgical books to enable direct access to such canonical reference documents? It is not clear why these canonical documents were kept next to other details about the life of the village. Were these canons somehow equal in their importance to registering the endowments of the church and donations by families in the community? To answer such a question requires a sustained study of the socio-historical context of Ṣadad in the sixteenth century. The issue of inheritance would later become a point of major discussion directly related to the question of marriage between the relatives in the village, where the choices were limited. Careful economical calculations had to be made when families needed to keep

¹⁰ E. Ishac, “The Synod of Mar Ḥananya IV / Mardin 1521”, in *Corpus Christianorum Conciliorum Oecumenicorum Generaliumque Decreta 5/1: The Councils of the Church of the East*, Turnhout (in press).

the endowments in certain circles. This issue remained vital until the twentieth century, as is seen in the decisions of Homs Synod in 1954.¹¹

The content of the colophons and the marginalia notes, which include several themes in the Syriac liturgical MSS, can be very diverse. There are, for instance, personal memories telling us about church hierarchies with dates and names of places and persons; unexpected memories; and other notes without any religious relevance such as remedies for certain diseases or accounting details for farmland. The range, quantity and quality of such notes may vary, but they express the life and social history of the community.

SCRIBES AND NON-SCRIBES

In showing the importance of the content of these colophons and marginal notes, one may ask about the motives behind this phenomenon. What were the urgent reasons to write such colophons and notes in the liturgical MSS, which were assigned for liturgical purposes, and not in separate notebooks? In fact, one of the possible reasons that made it easier for scribing these kinds of notes, was simply the availability of these liturgical MSS on a daily basis as they were being used for prayers. These codices were always accessible to the community members in general, especially the ecclesiastics, such as bishops, priests, and deacons, who were using these MSS for their daily prayers (in fact, it is still the case nowadays, for many Syriac parishes). This made it possible for the users of these liturgical MSS to note what they thought to be important, especially regarding the history of the parish community. Of course, this may be seen as striking from a scholarly perspective, in which rare books and MSS should be carefully protected, but for the authoritative users of these MSS these are the collective memory books of the community.

In addition to the scribes who were generally the writers of the colophons and some of the marginalia notes, the writers of the non-scribal notes vary widely. They can be the readers who used these MSS – such as the clerics – but will be someone literate or with enough authority to add notes with confidence. Sometimes minor historical events are noted that took place during their reading of the MS (Patriarch Aphrem Barsoum is one such example). Some notes were written by the owners who wanted to record the provenance of these liturgical MSS (or librarians and book keepers at monasteries and churches may have been the ones who wrote such notes). Additionally, there are also marginal and end notes written by visitors and pilgrims to the monasteries and churches where these MSS were used for prayers. There are also notes to document the names of those who did additional work to these MSS such as binding, repairing, or completing the text when MSS were dam-

¹¹ G. Kiraz and E. Ishac, “The Synod of Homs IV”, in *Corpus Christianorum Conciliorum Oecumenicorum Generaliumque Decreta 5/1: The Councils of the Church of the East*, Turnhout (in press).

nah from a 9th-cent. MS in the Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate Library (Dam 12/23 = SOP 367).



The dates that these marginal notes were written can vary, starting from the date of copying (or transmitting earlier colophons from the *Vorlage*), up to more recent dates. The author of this paper remembers how two priests in Aleppo would take their pens after reading some of the older notes at the end of a liturgical MS and adding their own notes about dates of their priestly ordinations, or some renovations in the Church, or historic events such as the consecration of the Myron oil. In this way they use the MS as if it was a community notebook for writing memories! The writers of these notes and colophons should be thanked for the historical records provided, so scholars now and in the future can find additional sources for understanding Syriac social history over time. It is a mistake to think that the notes were written because of a misunderstanding of the value of the MSS. On the contrary, the marginal notes attest (perhaps unconsciously) to duty of continuing a long authentic tradition by making sure to document in those holy books whatever might be useful to future generations of the community.

A good example is the famous scholar Patriarch Aphrem Barsoum. It is interesting to see in many of the Syriac MSS in different collections, especially the Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate Library, how Barsoum himself wrote marginal notes on each MS he studied (sometimes giving his scholarly opinion about the MSS). Sometimes notes were written by Barsoum on the same MS at different stages in his life: as a monk, as a bishop and as a Patriarch (he was consecrated in 1933). When he became the supreme head of his Church, he ordered the collection of many of the MSS he had previously checked and studied at earlier stages of his life to be included in the Patriarchate Library collection. That is why many MSS came from the old Jerusalem library, the Zafaran monastery in Mardin, and other MSS collected from other libraries. Such a person was certainly aware of the value of the MSS; his marginal notes were not made because he underestimated their value. On the contrary, he knew very well that they would be read in the future and that future readers might appreciate the kinds of traces he left behind.

Some of Barsoum's marginal notes were written when he was travelling with some of the MSS to the USA, informing us where he stayed and how he wanted to publish one of them in Chicago! His marginal notes therefore document how the MSS travelled with him. In other MSS, such as in the collection of St George's Syrian Orthodox Church in Aleppo, he mentions in a marginal note how the MSS were moved from Edessa/Urfa to Aleppo, and he tells us about the atrocities of Sayfo II (1915) which forced the Syriac communities to migrate to Syria (SOAA 0148S).

The timeline of these historical notes in margins or as colophons may start from the time of scribing the MS, but also in some cases the timeline concerning the mentioned dates in these notes can start even before the date of the MS itself. This happens when scribes copy older colophons from the *Vorlage* which they have used. In the Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate Library collection there are many examples in which the importance of the MSS is not in the physical date of the MS itself, but because of the transmission of the *Vorlage* (which is in most cases lost).

Scribes are not only copyists who do the work of transmitting previous texts, they also transmit their unique experience during the task. It is natural for a scribe to convey their emotions while living with the codex they have scribed over a period of months or even years. While most Syriac scribes were from ecclesial circles, it is not unexpected to find Christian symbolism in the manuscripts. Let us take for example the opening chapters of their codices, especially the liturgical ones. For example, in CFMM 00627 (a Syriac Anaphoras MS) where crosses surround the first page of the MS.

Of course, as expected, scribes take the opportunity to mention their names after painting a beautiful cross (where many colors are used), which may function as an artist's signature in our modern understanding. For example, the scribe of CFMM 00627 in f.12v, recorded his name in Garshuni:  "the work of the despicable deacon Yousef the son of the late deacon Dawood." The scribe had artistic talent, and painted several crosses around this Syriac Anaphoras MS (f. 60v, 61r). The religious symbolism is not only limited to crosses (although they are the major theme), for example in Aleppo MS: SOAA 029 (t), a chalice decorated with little crosses with words from the gospel: .

We notice, moreover, that some of the scribe's information is presented as a piece of art, but that the scribe still tries to be informative by giving his name, or a date that he wanted to record. In some cases, he distributes pieces of information in an unexpected way, such as by putting the letters in different places inside the decoration. It is very common to see colophons written in margins, which can also be considered as a kind of art which the scribe used to document events around the pages. Colophons at the end of manuscripts take the form of a triangle (see for example CFMM 01144 f. 121v, where there are six triangular colophons in Garshuni and Arabic with historical records). Another artistic observation can be seen when colophons are surrounded with a line to look like the shape of a cloud, attempting to draw the reader's attention to the note (ex.: CFMM 1144, 3r).

The previous examples and many others lead us to think about the connection between the shapes and the data of the colophons. It is probably not possible to separate the two. The scribe who consumed his time in making notes and colophons in an artistic way did not do it without purpose. Even though many examples show us that decorations were simply for practical reasons, for example to cover a scribal error a scribe might create some nice birds or religious symbols, and perhaps faces. However, a planned and decorative colophon is evidence that the scribe chose to dedicate time and had freedom of expression. For example, the Syriac Anaphoras manuscript from Mar Behnam Monastery (MBM 00057, p. 17) includes an index of the Anaphora texts inside five circles to create the shape of a cross (on the facing page too). The name of the scribe is written in six squares around the index-cross.

Although one of the main topics in Syriac colophons is the memory of the scribe (so the readers can pray for the scribe), in colophons in the shape of the

cross the first task was probably to impress the readers (and second, to pray for the scribe).

Indeed, liturgical manuscript production is very important in this context. It is interesting to know who funded those luxurious lectionaries. As we saw earlier in this paper, in the Mardin Lectionary of CFMM 00037 there is a very beautiful miniature (a developed artistic effort) where the scribe thanks and prays for the donor Abu <I>shaq who funded the costs of the beautiful lectionary, sometimes using gold ink.

There are of course many colophons in which liturgical books are used to document the social and economic life of the community, such as the endowments of the Church and donations of the community. These donations are always offered in memory of loved ones, with the good remembrance: *dukhrono tobō* ܕܘܚܪܘܢܐ ܬܘܒܐ!

CONCLUSION

Scholarly interest in “Scribal Habits,” including the scribal notes in MSS as well as the paleographical characteristics of those scribes,¹² can perhaps be augmented by another phenomenon – “Non-Scribal Habits”. These are the notes written in MSS by a community throughout its history, resulting in an accumulation of important historical notes.

In reality, the authors of these marginal notes or additional colophons are not the scribes, but others whose history was added to the scribe’s book, providing a huge accumulation of notes across different times and places. These notes transcend logical expectations without any clear answer to explain their existence at the beginning or at the end of the liturgical MSS, such as in the Lectionary of Mallaha (CFMM 00041).

This phenomenon developed organically, not artificially. It seems that the writers of these non-scribal notes were aware of their responsibility to continue the old tradition by providing future generations, wherever possible, with historical notes.

The focus here, therefore, is not on scribes. In other words, “let us forget for a while about the scribes, and let us focus on the notes”. This may help in constructing a parallel historical corpus which may be built from the margins of MSS to lead us toward a “History of Margins”. This unique information will help us better understand the social history of the Syriac communities in the Middle East. Thanks to their marginal notes, we can learn about events that have gone unrecorded in the classical sources of historiography.

¹² G. Kiraz and S. Schmidtke (eds), *Scribal Habits in Near Eastern Manuscript Traditions*, Gorgias Press, 2021.

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NUN-SCRIBES AND THEIR COLOPHONS: FEMALE SELF-IDENTIFICATION AND REMEMBRANCE IN EARLY MODERN ITALY

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Italian nuns produced thousands of manuscripts in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Colophon use became increasingly common in this period and nuns used these paratextual spaces to present themselves in a range of ways. Though generally dismissed as formulaic, a deeper analysis of these metatexts reveals information about nuns' work, education, knowledge of texts, reading, and devotional practices, offering a unique view of cloistered women's lives that is otherwise difficult to recover. The essay examines a range of colophon typologies, motives for writing, and describes how colophon language can be used to identify previously unidentified manuscripts produced by nun-scribes.

Religious women have a long history of producing books. As authors, copyists, musical notators, printers, decorators, and painters, nuns were active in book production from the early medieval period onward in Europe, sometimes leaving notes to their readers in their colophons.¹ Italian nuns produced thousands of manuscripts

¹ For a broad survey of nuns' book production, see the three volumes devoted to *Nuns' Literacies in Medieval Europe*, edited by Blanton, O'Mara and Stoop (2013–2017). Studies of nuns' book production in medieval Europe (mostly on Germanic and English nun-scribes) began being published as early as the 1960s, and increased in number beginning in the 1990s, focused on the ninth- and twelfth-century monastic Renaissances. Two important monographs on female monastic book production in the Germanic lands include: Alison Beach, *Women as Scribes: Book Production and Monastic Reform in Twelfth-Century Bavaria* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004) and Cynthia Cyrus, *The Scribes for Women's Convents in Late Medieval Germany* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009). On Portuguese nun-scribes, see Paula Cardoso, "Beyond the Colophon: Assessing Role in Manuscript Production and

in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and colophon use became increasingly common during this period.² Though generally dismissed as formulaic and non-specific, a deeper analysis of these metatexts reveals information about nuns' work, education, knowledge of texts, reading, and devotional practices, offering a unique view of cloistered women's lives that is otherwise difficult to recover.³ They were familiar with and made use of colophons common in the period, often altering them slightly, and also departed from this language in surprising ways. Italian nuns provided information that demonstrates their desire to be remembered as pious members of their community as well as, in some cases, their pride in and identification with their aristocratic or wealthy merchant families. Nuns borrowed colophon language from revered mentors in the scriptorium. They often used characteristic phrases, and religious houses with an established scriptorium commonly developed a "convent style." Whether they chose to use formulaic language or to depart from it, it was a choice – and the specific language chosen for their colophons can be used to identify new texts and provide a better understanding of the circulation and copying of texts from one religious community to another.

Not surprisingly, colophons are the primary method through which nun-scribes are identified. Examined as a group, these metatexts offer insight in the changing demographics of women in convent life and demonstrate how nun-scribes' work illuminates new forms of self-expression in the early modern period. Female self-identification in colophons, where the scribe identifies herself or shares information about her work or life, increased steadily throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, in part due to the changing demographics in Italian convent populations.⁴ Female education was on the rise in the fifteenth century⁵ and the

Acquisition in the Observant Dominican Nunneries of Early-Modern Portugal," *Pecia* 19 (*Outils et pratique des artisans du livre au Moyen Âge*), (Turhout: Brepols, 2017): 59–86.

² On Italian nun-scribes, see Brian Richardson's writing on nuns as scribes in his *Women and the Circulation of Texts in Renaissance Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020): 96–126; see also the publications cited in the bibliography by Luisa Miglio and Marco Palma, and their database *Donne e cultura scritta nel Medioevo* (<http://www.tramedivita.it/donne/index.html>) which identifies hundreds of female scribes working in medieval Europe from the eighth through fifteenth centuries. For an overview of nun-scribes working in Italy, see Melissa Moreton, "'Scritto di bellissima lettera': Nuns' Book Production in Fifteenth and Sixteenth-Century Italy," unpublished dissertation (University of Iowa, 2013).

³ Italian nuns' colophons are analyzed in depth in Moreton's "Pious Voices: Nun-scribes and the Language of Colophons in Late Medieval Italy," *Essays in Medieval Studies* 29 (2014): 43–73.

⁴ I will use the term 'convent' according to the English language usage, to describe a nuns' house. This is unlike the modern Italian usage, where the term 'convento' is not gendered, but can refer to a male or female house connected to a mendicant order, such as Dominican, Franciscan, Augustinian, etc. (in contrast to non-medicant orders, such as Benedictines, whose houses are called 'monasteri'). In the medieval usage, nuns referred to their own

increase in dowry prices meant that not all daughters could marry and that many entered the convent as an alternative to being married off below their social status.⁶ Girls were educated at home, or in the convent through formal and informal means. It is clear for example that Angela di Lionardo Rucellai, one particularly talented nun-scribe at the Florentine Dominican Convent of San Jacopo di Ripoli, acquired literacy in Latin and the vernacular as well as her writing skills entirely within the convent since she entered San Jacopo at only a year of age in 1444.⁷ Other girls were educated at home, alongside brothers, and were later mentored within the convent by older nuns in writing and the calligraphic arts. With a high number of literate girls and women in cloistered life, these graphic skills were channeled into convent industries that offered a vocation for these educated women (one rarely afforded to their secular sisters) and provided income for their religious communities.⁸ The rise in nuns' colophon use in the late fifteenth century

houses variously as 'convento,' 'monastero' or 'monasterio,' regardless of their religious order.

⁵ On girls' education in Italy in the period, see Richardson (*Women*, 97–99); Moreton, "Exchange and Alliance: The Sharing and Gifting of Books in Women's Houses in Late Medieval and Renaissance Italy," in *Nuns' Literacies in Medieval Europe: The Antwerp Dialogue* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2017), 385–390; Sharon Strocchia, "Learning the Virtues: Convent Schools and Female Culture in Renaissance Florence," in *Women's Education in Early Modern Europe: A History, 1500–1800*. ed. Barbara Whitehead (New York: Garland, 1999), 3–46. On studies of nuns' education in Naples, Lucca, Brussels, and Vadstena see the essays by Ambrosio, Vandi, Stoop, and Hedström in the *Nuns' Literacies in Medieval Europe* volumes listed in the bibliography.

⁶ Nuns' dowries, paid to the convent, cost much less than dowries that accompanied women in marriage. In Florence, the city government subsidized dowries for entry into both the convent and marriage, for families that could not afford to pay, such as the family of nun-scribe Maria degli Albizzi. See Arthur, "New Evidence for a Scribal-Nun's Art: Maria di Ormanno degli Albizzi at San Gaggio," *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz* 59. Bd., H. 2 (2017): 272; Anthony Molho, *Marriage Alliance in Late Medieval Florence* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994); and Gabriella Zarri, *Recinti: Donne, clausura e matrimonio nella prima età moderna* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2000).

⁷ Florence, Archivio di Stato, MS San Jacopo di Ripoli, 23: Croniche, segnato A, 1508–1778, folios 121r–122v. This source, the Necrology of San Jacopo di Ripoli, and Rucellai's fascinating biography have been explored by Sharon Strocchia. See Strocchia, "Savonarolan Witenesses: The Nuns of San Jacopo and the Piagnone Movement in Sixteenth-Century Florence," *Sixteenth Century Journal* XXXVIII/2 (2007): 393–418.

⁸ On convent populations, see Strocchia, *Nuns and Nunneries in Renaissance Florence* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009) and Richardson, *Women*, 96–97. Strocchia notes the statistic that before the Black Death in 1348, one in 250 residents of Florence was a nun and by 1552, one in nineteen was (Strocchia, *Nuns*, xii). Richardson notes the statistic that three out of five patrician girls in Venice was a nun by 1581 and convent populations in Milan increased fourfold and in Bologna eightfold over the course of the sixteenth century (*Women*, 96–97).

also coincides with the advent of print, a greater circulation of texts, a rise in literacy among the secular population, a new demand for texts within reformed Orders, and a greater demand of books in general – a demand met by work in the convent scriptorium. There was a particular boon in Italian nuns’ scribal work from the mid-fifteenth century through the late sixteenth century, though nuns continued to copy out texts through the early modern period and beyond.⁹ Copying gave women control over their own texts. They could copy a devotional text they were interested in reading (and copying in itself was an act of devotion), produce a liturgical manuscript (often too specific and / or too large to make it profitable for a printing establishment), or gather numerous texts into a specific devotional compilation suited specifically to their use. Without ready access to a bookseller’s shop, Italian nuns often copied out texts on loan, and borrowed from other convents or religious overseers. One example comes from a nun – likely Venetian – who wrote out the *Rule of Saint Benedict* on paper in the early sixteenth century, copying it word for word including the colophon from a copy printed in Venice in 1532 (Figures 1 and 2).¹⁰ It is odd to read a handwritten note that says “Stampata in Vinegia” (“Printed in Venice”), but the nun-scribe is being thorough and citing her source. The printed preface to the text tells us that this edition was edited specifically for use by Benedictine nuns. At a moment when an Observant Benedictine reform movement was sweeping through Venice and its convents, new reformed texts were in demand; the nun is clearly interested in having the most recent and most authentic copy of the Rule of her patron saint – and reminding her reader that this was it. Having a known exemplar and a nun-scribe’s copy to check it against is a rare opportunity to examine how female scribes corrected and annotated texts, and demonstrated their knowledge of Latin and vernacular languages. The nun-copyist of this Rule demonstrates her familiarity with writing conventions such as the condensing or expansion of abbreviations – something she does quite a bit throughout her copying of

⁹ This fifteenth-century proliferation of nun-scribed books is not limited to Italy and Europe. Nun-scribes in colonial Mexico continue to produce books into the twentieth century.

¹⁰ The manuscript is University of Toronto Fisher Rare Book Library, MSS 01207. The nun-scribe was likely Venetian, given the Venetian printing of the *Rule* for Venetian Benedictine houses and the vernacular possession notes in the manuscript which have a distinctive Venetian dialect. I had only heard of this practice, before seeing the Toronto Fisher copy and was able to check it against the only known surviving copy of the printed text (according to the Edit16 database: <https://edit16.iccu.sbn.it/resultset-titoli/-/titoli/detail/5249>), in the Biblioteca capitolare Fabroniana in Pistoia, Italy. On manuscripts copied from incunables see Albinia De la Mare, “New Research on humanistic scribes in Florence,” in *Miniatura fiorentina del rinascimento, 1440–1525*, ed. Annarosa Garzelli, vol. I (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1985), 413; and her note from Buhler, *The Fifteenth-Century Book* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1960), 15–16 and 34–35 where he says – with some exaggeration – “experience has taught me that every manuscript ascribed to the second half of the fifteenth century is potentially (and often without questions) a copy of some incunable”; also Lutz, *Essays on Manuscripts and Rare Books* (Hamden: Archon Books, 1975): 129–38.

this text. She spells out “Francesco,” “compagni,” and “novembre” (abbreviated in the colophon) and abbreviates “santo” in her copy (spelled out in the colophon). The cursive script she chose and the hurriedness of her hand may indicate that she copied the text out quickly, perhaps in order to return the book to whomever she borrowed it from – another convent, another nun, a family member or perhaps a spiritual male overseer. Possession notes by a different hand in the manuscript indicate that the book was used by another female reader after it was made and read by the copyist.¹¹

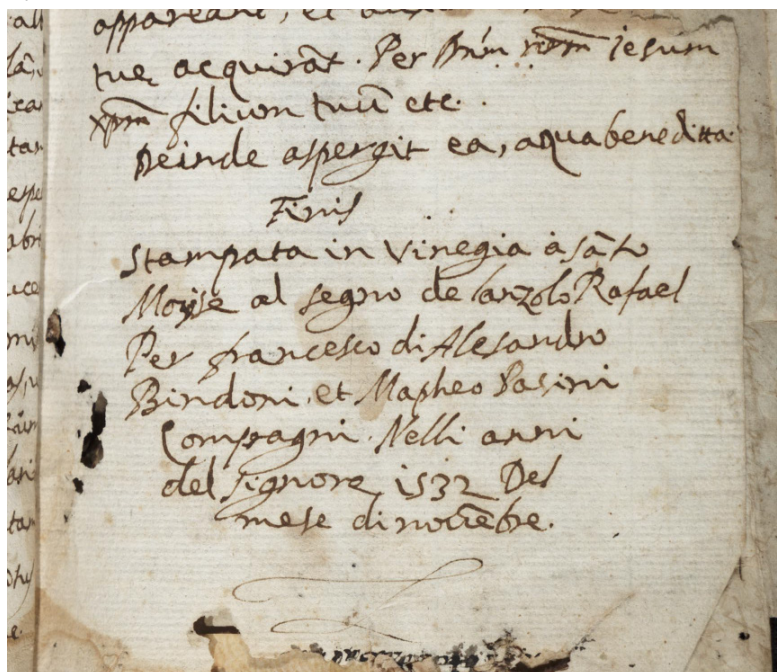


Figure 1. Venetian nun’s copy of the 1532 printing of the *Regula del sanctissimo Benedetto*. Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, MMS 01207. Reproduced with permission.

¹¹ The manuscript contains possession notes on folio 3r in a very rough hand from another woman who appears to be new at practicing writing her name. She says: Io Donna Zeza del Bindo/ Io Donna Lucrezia del Bino, sono padrona de questa regola Santo Benedetto” (Me, Lady Zeza del Bindo/ Me, Lady Lucrezia del Bino, I am the owner of this Rule of Saint Benedict). The title of ‘Lady’ does not necessarily mean that the owner was not a nun or connected to a religious order, especially in this period, where noblewomen commonly became nuns and widows often retired to the convent at the end of their child-bearing lives. The diminutive name “Zeza” for “Lucrezia” has a particularly Venetian ring to it and may help to confirm the origins of the manuscript as Venetian.

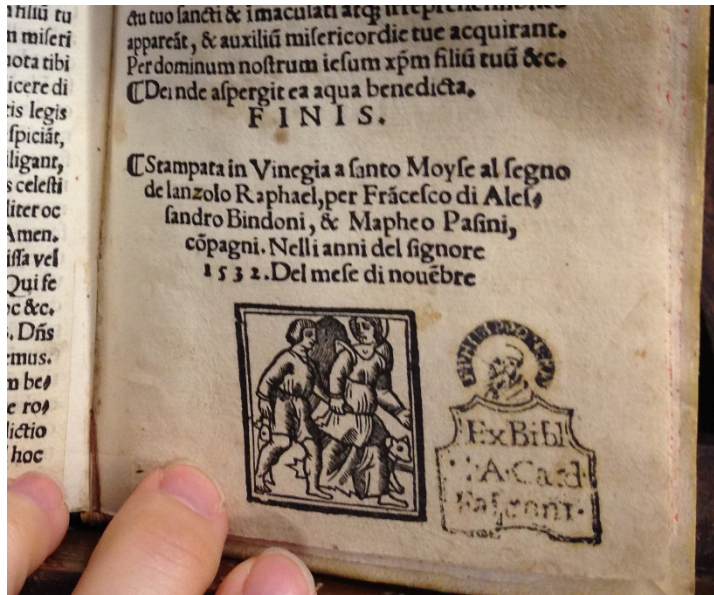


Figure 2. The nun-scribe's exemplar, the *Regula del sanctissimo Benedetto* printed in 1532 in Venice by Francesco Bindoni and Maffeo Pasini. Biblioteca capitolare Fabroniana, Pistoia. Reproduced with permission.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY – USING COLOPHONS TO FIND NEW MANUSCRIPTS

Most of the manuscripts nun-scribes produced did not include *sottoscrizioni* or scribal signatures, where the nun names herself, and it is therefore difficult to identify the corpus of a nun's work unless one has access to an intact collection originating from the convent. Within intact collections of manuscripts, some containing scribal signatures with names, one can use paleographical evidence from known manuscripts to identify unsigned manuscripts by the same scribe. For dispersed collections (where manuscripts are no longer connected with a convent archives or are in European collections far removed from their original place of origin) where the scribe is not named and convent not known, using colophon language to search for new manuscripts is an effective research methodology.

It is clear that nun-scribes chose from a wide range of colophon language. This was determined based on the genre of the text they were copying, the audience/reader/ buyer, language of the main text (Latin or vernacular), and the particular message they wanted to convey about their place within the convent and the larger world – spiritual and earthly. Though it is easy, at first glance, to dismiss these as formulaic, each colophon is unique – whether it varies slightly from a standard formula in its spelling, word order or naming conventions. Within a given community and between scribes who worked closely together, nun-copyists often reused phrases again and again, created unique language akin to a convent style. It is this uniqueness that can be used to find new manuscripts. A search using specific colophon phrases within publicly accessible electronic databases such as *Manus Online: Manoscritti delle biblioteche italiane* (<https://manus.iccu.sbn.it/web/manus>) can re-

turn information on manuscripts matching that language.¹² Each potential match must be investigated and ultimately examined in person and/or through images gathered from the holding institution, in order to verify that the manuscript was produced by a known scribe. Each scribe had a particular way of working, scripts that she was adept at using, and a specific way of calligraphing each character. Even within a uniform convent scriptorium style, each scribe's hand produced tell-tale signs unique to her. A paleographical study of the manuscript's script (style of handwriting), and the individual scribe's hand (how they write each character within a script) can help verify or reject a potential match. Each convent with an established scriptorium practice also had a systematic way of working, from sourcing materials, collating manuscript folios, following Gregory's Rule (matching hair/hair and flesh/flesh in parchment manuscripts), to using catchwords and ruling pages for writing (number of lines, type of ruling medium used). Codicological data that places this manuscript within the wider scriptorium practice of a given house – such as line ruling and the use of Gregory's Rule (hair/hair and flesh/flesh alignment of parchment surfaces) – are also helpful in placing new manuscript candidates within the production of a known convent.



Figure 3. Colophon within scroll around portrait of San Gaggio nun-scribe Maria di Ormanno degli Albizzi. Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek MS 1923, f. 89r. Reproduced with permission.

¹² *Manus Online* aggregates data from hundreds of libraries across Italy and has an Advanced Search feature that allows searching by phrases, words, date ranges, library collections, shelfmarks, titles, names, etc. It also charts the date range of the occurrence of a phrase or word within the metadata from the database's manuscripts. This search was done using the colophon phrase: "pro merito caritatis expostulat."

This is the case with several newly discovered manuscripts from the convent scriptorium of the Augustinian hermits of San Gaggio in Florence. The accomplished nun-scribes who worked closely with the Augustinian friars of Santo Spirito and secular illuminators, produced luxurious liturgical manuscripts, devotional texts, prayer books, and Books of Hours from the mid-fifteenth through the early sixteenth century. One scribe, Maria di Ormanno degli Albizzi, was identified using colophon language. Her only known manuscript (now Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek MS 1923) had been an art historical mystery for centuries, her full name and convent unknown. The book is a mid fifteenth-century breviary, scribed by a nun named Maria (and at least one other scribe), and includes her portrait within a cartouche and colophon within the scroll around her head: “ANCILLA YHU XPI MARIA ORMANI FILIA SCRIPSIT M^oCCCCLIII (The handmaiden of Jesus Christ, Maria, daughter of Ormanno, wrote this in 1453)” (Figure 3).¹³ Her identity had been speculated upon since the sixteenth century, when her portrait was first noted by Giorgio Vasari in his famous biography of the *Lives of the Most Illustrious Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*. Due to a misreading of the Latin colophon, she became known as “Maria Ormani” and thought to be the painter of the self-portrait (rather than the daughter of a man named Ormanno, and the scribe). The manuscript also includes another colophon at the end of the text (Figure 4), which begins: “Qui scripsit scribat et semper cum domino vivat. Vivat in celis in suo nomine felix, qui legentium orationes pro merito karitatis expostulat.” (*May she who wrote this continue to write and live always with the Lord. Live happily in heaven, in his name, she asks for the goodness of charity from whomever reads these prayers*).¹⁴

¹³ Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, MS 1923, folio 89r.

¹⁴ Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek MS 1923, folio 486v. The colophon is much longer and includes a date later than Maria’s portrait colophon (1453). This suggests a longer history of production of the manuscript, though my argument against this is too lengthy to explore in this essay. The full colophon also ends with a date: “...Anno domini M CCCC^o L XXXX die vigesimo quinto mensis Madii. Deo gratias. Amen” (...*In the year of our Lord 1490 on the 25th day of May. Thanks be to God. Amen.*) However, the textual colophon date of 1490 is dubious. M^oCCCC^oLXXXX was a common way of writing 1490 in Roman numerals in the period, but it does appear that some text (LXXXX) has been scraped away and rewritten and could have been M^oCCCC^oLiii (1453). The later date here requires more investigation and possibly multispectral imaging to reveal the writing embedded within the parchment under the 1490 date. For other examples of the particularly Italian “Qui scripsit scribat” colophon, its geographic and temporal distribution, see *Literary Snippets: A Colophon Reader*.

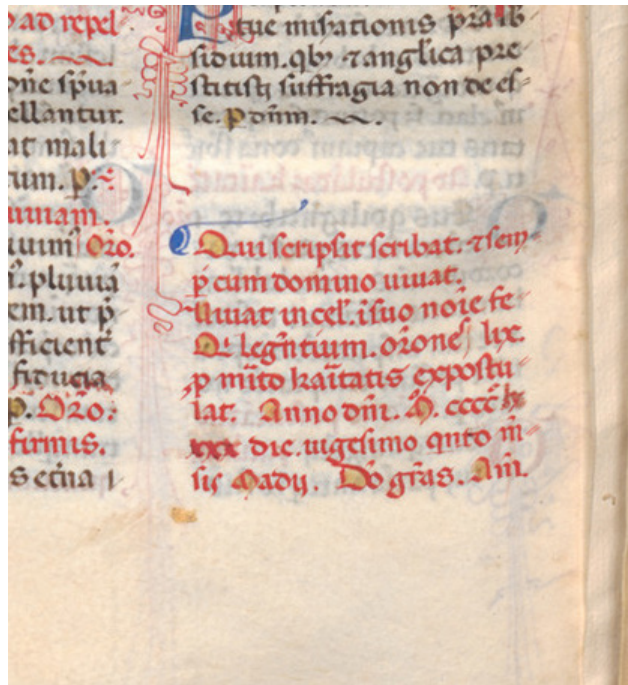


Figure 4. Second colophon at the end of Maria di Ormanno degli Albizzi's breviary, made at San Gaggio, Florence. Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek MS 1923, f. 486v. Reproduced with permission.

In collaboration with art historian Kathleen Arthur, who had been searching for Maria's identity, it was suggested that she use the colophon language to find other manuscripts by this scribe, since my research had revealed that these colophon patterns were unique to each convent and each nun-scribe. Using this method, searching the phrase "Qui legentium orationes pro merito caritatis expostulat," she did in fact identify two new manuscripts belonging to Maria or her sister-scribes at San Gaggio – the *Confessions* of Saint Augustine finished in 1453 (Rome, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale Vittorio Emanuele II, MS Vitt. Em. 856) and a *Liber moralium* of Saint Gregory dated 22 September 1460 (Dresden, Sächsische Landesbibliothek – Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, Mscr. Dresd. OB.5). Both manuscripts provided the name of the nun-scribes' convent, the Florentine Augustinian house of Santa Caterina de Monte, commonly known as San Gaggio. Using this information, Arthur searched the convent records in the Florentine archives and found Maria's name, revealing that she belonged to a branch of the illustrious Albizzi family, an extremely wealthy merchant family who had fallen out of favor with the ruling Medici and been permanently exiled from the city in the 1430, at the time Maria

entered San Gaggio as a novice.¹⁵ It is perhaps for this reason that Maria does not include her patronymic family name in her colophon, in a period in which the Albizzi were poorly favored by the ruling elite of Florence. Maria finds other means of self-identification to present herself as an important member of her conventual and civic community. As Arthur notes, her colophon scroll and portrait are placed in the lower register of the first folio of the breviary's Proper of Seasons, a space normally reserved for saints' portraits or a noble family's coat of arms. In all ways she is signaling "I am from an important and wealthy family" without actually giving us her family name.

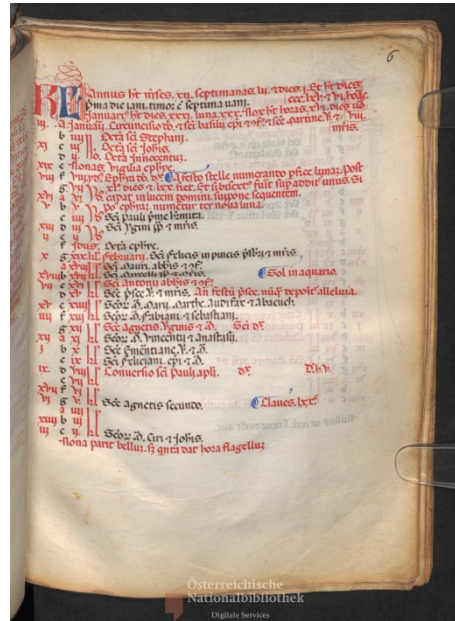
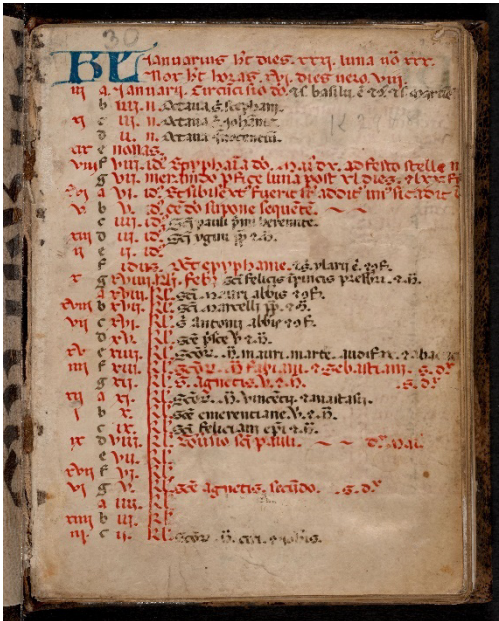


Figure 5. LEFT: Calendar for January / February in a *Book of Hours*, from the San Gaggio convent scriptorium. Boston, Boston Public Library, MS q Med.279. Reproduced with permission. Figure 6. RIGHT: Calendar for January / February in a breviary scribed by Maria di Ormanno degli Albizzi of the convent of San Gaggio, Florence. Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek MS 1923.

¹⁵ Her father was Ormanno, son of Rinaldo degli Albizzi; both were exiled in 1433, though some members of the extended family who were loyal to the Medici were allowed to remain in Florence. Arthur's essay discusses this and the new manuscript evidence and has been important in revealing the breadth of production at San Gaggio, whose account books document the sale of books, receipt of writing supplies, purchase of binding materials and commissions from the friars of Santo Spirito and the *cartolai* or booksellers of the city with whom they collaborated. See Arthur, "New Evidence," 271–280.

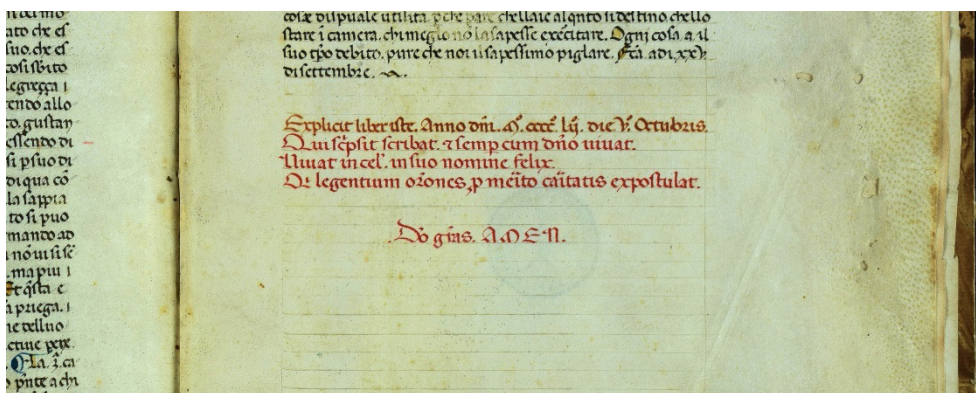


Figure 7. Colophon from a San Gaggio nun-scribe in a work by Giovanni Domini. Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, MS Acq. e doni 8, f. 188r. Reproduced with permission.

In another search, using the colophon language from this second colophon in the book, I was also able to locate two new manuscripts connected to San Gaggio. The first is a Florentine *Book of Hours* dated 1 January 1467 that passed through a dealer's hands in 2015. Manuscript scholar Peter Kidd, who authored the dealer's catalog, identified it as Florentine coming from an Augustinian house, and presumed it belonged to Santo Spirito.¹⁶ However, a paleographical comparison suggests that the script and hands show similarities to those of the nun-scribes of San Gaggio. The colophon, with similar language to that found in Maria's breviary as well as other San Gaggio manuscripts, reads: "Finito libro isto referamus gratia Christo. Qui scripsit scribat semper cum Domino vivat. Vivat in celis in suo nomine felix. Anno domini. M^occcclxvij. die 1 in mensis Ianuarii" (*Having finished the book, let us give thanks to Christ. May she who wrote this continue to write and live always with the Lord. Live happily in heaven, in his name. In the year of our Lord 1467 on the 1st day of January.*)¹⁷ The calendars in the 1453 breviary and 1467 *Book of Hours* also appear to include an identical list of saints (Figures 5 and 6).¹⁸

¹⁶ The book of hours has passed through many hands since I first saw images of it in the Avoa auction catalog in 2014, days before it was sold. The manuscript was put up for sale by Avoa, Ltd, in 2014 (Books of Hours/Livres d'Heures, no. 1); sold at auction by Bloomsbury, December 9, 2015 (lot 121); sold again by Bloomsbury/Dreweatts on July 2, 2019 (lot 83) to Les Enluminures, Paris; sold by Les Enluminures, Paris, to the Boston Public Library in June 2020 (now cataloged as MS q Med.279). It is now digitized and available to view online: <https://ark.digitalcommonwealth.org/ark:/50959/2r36xh78c>.

¹⁷ The colophon is on folios 136r–v, Boston, Boston Public Library, MS q Med.279.

¹⁸ Aside from a few entries, the saints and feast days on the calendar pages of the 1467 *Book of Hours* (Boston Public Library, MS q Med.279) match the days in Maria's breviary (Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, MS 1923), the main difference being the designation of red letter days. The hands in the *Book of Hours* are rougher and less practiced than those

The second manuscript, found through a colophon phrase search on *Manus Online*, contains works by Dominican writer Giovanni Dominici, including his *Libro d'amore di carità*, *Trattato delle dieci questioni*, *Epistole a Bartolomea degli Alberti*, *Epistola a una figlia spirituale*, and *Epistole alle Monache del Corpus Domini di Venezia* – devotional works popular among nuns (Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, MS Acq. e doni 8).¹⁹ The colophon, whose phrasing matches other noted manuscripts from San Gaggio, reads: “Explicit liber iste. Anno Domini M^occcc^olij^o die V^o octubris. Qui scripsit scribat et semper cum Domino vivat. Vivat in celis in suo nomine felix. Qui legentium orationes pro merito caritatis expostulat. Deo gratias. Amen” (*This book is complete. In the year of our Lord 1452 on the 5th day of October. May she who wrote this continue to write and live always with the Lord. Live happily in heaven, in his name. She asks for the goodness of charity from whomever reads these prayers. Thanks be to God. Amen*) (Figure 7).²⁰ Completed 1452, it predates Maria’s breviary containing the 1453 colophon and portrait and was likely completed while the scribal production on that work was already underway in the convent scriptorium. The 1452 manuscript was completed by three scribes and, aside from the almost identical colophon, shows extremely close paleographical similarity to the work of the San Gaggio scriptorium.²¹ Another identifying factor is the secular male illuminator whose historiated initials and distinctive border work decorates the pages. He is identified in this new 1452 manuscript as Bartolomeo Varnucci,²² a miniaturist active in Florence c. 1437–1479.²³ His decorated initial, shows Giovanni Dominici giving the book to an Augustinian nun, who kneels under the figure of caritas waving a banner similar in style to the scroll framing Maria’s breviary portrait (Figure 8). The 1453 breviary contains work by two unidentified manuscript painters (not counting the painter of Maria’s portrait), and one of these can now be

found in Maria’s breviary (Maria was not the only scribe of the breviary), but show similarities to those produced by the San Gaggio scriptorium. The corrections in the *Book of Hours* and variations in ink, pigments, and quality of parchment, suggest that it was produced for use within the convent. It was not a high end production for an external patron, though many books of hours were made in Florentine convent scriptoria for sale to and gift exchange with external patrons and clientele.

¹⁹ *Manus Online: Manoscritti delle biblioteche italiane* (<https://manus.iccu.sbn.it/risultati-ricerca-manoscritti/-/manus-search/results#1666558982949>) (accessed 15 August 2022).

²⁰ Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, MS Acq. e doni 8, folio 188r.

²¹ The author consulted high resolution color photographs of the manuscript and will carry out a codicological study of the work.

²² Lisa Frantini and Stefano Zamponi, *I manoscritti datati del fondo Acquisti e Doni e dei fondi minori della Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana di Firenze* (Florence: Sismel, 2004), 29 and plate 38.

²³ On Bartolomeo Varnucci see De Floriani, “Bartolomeo Varnucci: Un messale e alcune precisazioni,” *Miniatura*, volume 5/6 (1996): 49–60; for Varnucci and his collaborators and clients (including the convents of Le Murate and San Gaggio), see Levi d’Ancona, *Miniatura e miniatori a Firenze dal XIV al XVI secolo* (Florence: Olschki, 1962), 29–37, 281–282.

identified as the same Bartolomeo Varnucci or at least a painter connected to his workshop. The workshop clearly also produced miniatures for the 1453 copy of Augustine's *Confessions*.²⁴ This solves one unknown in the production of the breviary and also sheds light on the relationship between the San Gaggio nuns and secular male miniaturists. Mid fifteenth-century Florence was a city extremely active in manuscript production, with secular scribes producing custom manuscripts in booksellers' shops, monks, and nuns in religious houses throughout the city copying out books. Since most women's convents with book production focused on scribal work and simple penwork initials, the high-end decoration of manuscripts' pages was outsourced to ubiquitous secular male illuminators, with whom they often formed trusted relationships and continued working with over decades. Varnucci is known to have collaborated with several convents and likely had a close working relationship with the San Gaggio nuns. Scholarship on Florentine illuminators and their work is fairly well-established; identifying known manuscripts by these collaborators will also be a useful methodology for tracing new manuscripts by these nuns.

PRIDE AND PIETY

The portrait of Maria di Ormanno degli Albizzi, and her colophon associations with family (rather than her religious house) was a departure from the pious tropes often used by religious scribes. However it was not unique in the period and several nun-scribes followed this form of self-identification, stressing their well-born origins (whether true or not), level of education, and family connections. Though from a poor branch of her family, nun-scribe Piera di Medici of the convent of Santa Verdiana in Florence tells us in the first of two colophons in her missal of 1447, that she is of noble Medici birth²⁵: "Petra soror, claro Medicorum sanguine nata, hoc sacrum virtutis opus transcripsit habendum, virginibus sancto viride cognomine dictis." (Sister Piera, born of noble Medici blood, transcribed this holy work of virtue, to be held by the virgins called by the surname of 'San Verdiano').²⁶

²⁴ Rome, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale Vittorio Emanuele II, MS Vitt. Em. 856. For images of the miniatures, see Arthur, "New Evidence...", 275, 277. Arthur notes that the miniatures are similar to those from the Florentine workshop of Filippo di Matteo Torelli.

²⁵ On Piera di Medici, see Sharon Strocchia, "Abbess Piera de' Medici and Her Kin: Gender, Gifts, and Patronage in Renaissance Florence," *Renaissance Studies* 28, no. 5 (2014): 695–713.

²⁶ Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, MS Conv. Sopp. Vallombrosa codex 235, folio 142v. See Miglio, "'A mulieribus conscriptos arbitror': Donne e scrittura," in *Scrivi e colofoni*, eds. Condello and De Gregorio (Spoleto: Centro Italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo, 1995), 261. The second colophon reads: "Librum hunc transcripsit Petra Bivigliani de Medicis, una ex sororibus in monasterio Sancti Iohannis Gualberti et Beate Verdiane Deo devotissime servientibus, Ordinis Vallis Umbrosae" (Piera di Bivigliano de' Medici transcribed this book,



Figure 8. First folio of San Gaggio nun-scribes copy of works by Giovanni Domini-
ci, with miniature by Bartolomeo Varnucci. Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Lauren-
ziana, MS Acq. e doni 8, f. 1r. Reproduced with permission.

one of the nuns from the monastery of San Giovanni Gualberti and the Beata Verdiana, de-
voutly serving God, in the Order of Vallombrosa).

Another scribe who identifies her kinship ties over her religious community is Lana dei Galvagni, Clarissan nun likely from northern Italy. On the last folio of a religious *zibaldone* she copied out in the late 1400s, she writes in Italian: “Franciscus et Claram. Questo libro si è scritto per mane de Lana dei Galvagni, fiola che fu de miser zan Bertolameo. Iesu Maria.” (*Francis and Clare. This book was written by the hand of Lana dei Galvagni, daughter of Sir San Bartholemew. Jesus Mary.*)²⁷ Also from northern Italy, is nun Domitilla Bernabuzi’s manuscript of Gregory Correr’s epistle *De commodis vitae regularis seu de contemptu mundi*, which she copied out in the vernacular in 1474. Her colophon, in Latin, states “Ego soror Domicilla filia magnifici domini Francisci Bernabutii de Faventia complevi hunc codicem die 21 decembris M°CCCC°74” (I, Sister Domitilla, daughter of magnificent Lord Francesco Bernabuzi of Faenza, finished this book on 21 December 1474) (Figure 9).²⁸ Perhaps intended to alert the reader to her level of education and worldliness, Domitilla ended her vernacular work with a Latin colophon, spectacularly shaping her colophon in a rectangle at the bottom of the folio, pointed to by the explicit which is scribed in the shape of a triangle or funnel centered on the page. Though shaped explicit / colophon combinations are seen in monastic books, they are not common in Italian nuns’ books and may reference the creatively-shaped endings in other book traditions or anticipate the shaped colophons commonly seen in printed books in northern Italy a few decades later (such as the Venetian colophon in Figure 2).²⁹ She also copied the text out in a humanist bookhand. While senior scribes learned a number of Gothic scripts as well as cursive, a humanist bookhand is rare and may point to Domitilla’s humanist education as a girl, in the northern city of Faenza. These four cases may be read as indicators of a shift in the mid to late fifteenth century, when pious tropes were no longer the only means of self-identification and women began to express a fuller range of identities and personal motives, identifying with their families rather than their religious communities.³⁰

Self-identification was always a choice, and often touched on tropes of piety. A number of colophons include language where the nun identifies herself as unworthy (“indegna”), servant (“serva” or “schiava”) of Christ, and sinner (“peccatrice” or similar) – however this occurs far less than one would expect.³¹ Examples

²⁷ Rome, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Varia 24 (574), folio 219v.

²⁸ Verona, Biblioteca Civica, MS 1196, folio 30v.

²⁹ The date of 1474 places this book in the incunable period of early printed books, when printing was just being established in Venice. Early incunable colophons were quite basic with shaped colophons not emerging in full force until the sixteenth century.

³⁰ For more on this departure from pious tropes, see Moreton, “Pious Voices,” 53–58.

³¹ Roughly twenty percent of nuns’ colophons included in Moreton’s study of over 50 Italian nun-scribes’ colophons include this language. See Moreton, “Pious Voices,” 45. There are numerous examples of this language coming from the Bridgettine double monastery of the Paradiso in Florence, and we see the same trope used at the Bridgettine mother house in distant Vadstena, Sweden. On the Florentine Bridgettines, see Mirello, *I manoscritti del Mon-*

in Florence come from the Bridgettine double monastery of the Paradiso, the Benedictines of Le Murate, and a number of Dominican houses. Formulas using pious self-identification sometimes connected women to spiritual exemplars within their order.

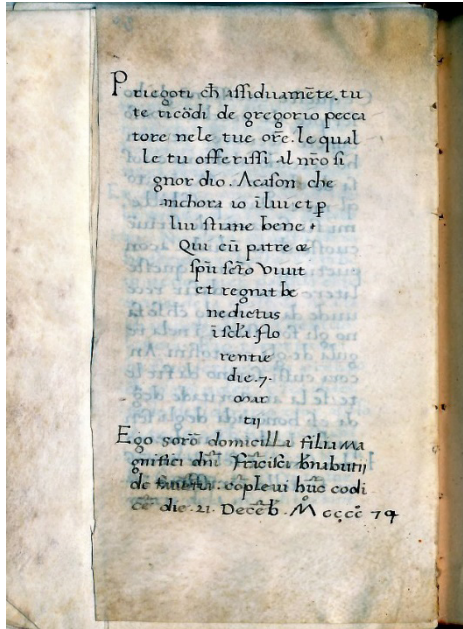


Figure 9. Colophon page of Domitilla Bernabuzi's 1474 copy of Gregory Correr's *De commodis vitae regularis seu de contemptu mundi*, written in a humanist bookhand. Verona, Biblioteca Civica, MS 1196, fol. 30v. Reproduced with permission.

astero del Paradiso di Firenze (Florence: Sismel, 2007). An example from Vadestena is MS C 508, Uppsala Universitetsbibliotek, Uppsala, Sweden, folio 45v. Swedish nun-scribe Christina Handsdotter Brask left a colophon in Old Swedish in a psalter and *directorium chori* (written in Latin), which was copied out by her and other sister-scribes between 1473–86, “Taessa bokena screff syster cristin hanssa dotter owerdogh conuentz syster i them tima tha syster anna fikconis och syster anna nicholau the waro cantrices.” (This book has been written by Christina Hansdotter, unworthy sister of the convent, at the time when Sister Anna Fickesdotter and Sister Anna Nilsson were cantrices). The use of “unworthy sister” allows her to be remembered as a pious member of the community, and one connected to important fellow nuns, the convent’s lead singers. The transcription and translation are from Lindell, “Christina Hansdotter Brask: A Vadstena Nun and Her Use of Writing,” in *Saint Birgitta, Syon and Vadstena*, eds. Gejrot, Risberg, and Åkestam (Stockholm: Royal Academy of Letter, 2010), 181–182.

In the sixteenth century, Dominican nuns from San Niccolò in Prato, San Jacopo di Ripoli, used versions of the phrase “indegna serva e schiava di Jesu cristo” (“unworthy servant and slave/servant of Jesus Christ”) consciously referencing Saint Catherine of Siena, who identified herself this way in her letters written two centuries earlier in the mid-1300s.³² A revered spiritual mother, Saint Catherine and her writings would have been familiar to female Dominicans, especially those who were literate and copying texts for their community. It will take a much larger dataset to determine if this phrase is particularly Dominican in style, but with a big data approach such analysis of formulas is promising (as is a study of language formulas by textual genre).

Suor Angela di Lionardo Rucellai, referred to herself as an “unworthy servant” in a Latin colophon at the end of her *Collectarium* of circa 1500: “Ego soror Angela indigna serva domini nostri Iesu Christi scripsi manu propria hoc collectarium” (I Suor Angela, unworthy servant of our Lord Jesus Christ, wrote this *Collectarium* in my own hand)” (Figure 10).³³ She omits this language in another *Collectarium* she copied, likely dating to c. 1490³⁴: “Ego soror angela de rucellariis monialis monasterii sancti Iacobi de Ripolis de florentia scripsi manu propria hoc collectarium. Deus sit laudatus et to [sic] corde benedictus.” (I Suor Angela di Rucellai of the monastery of San Jacopo di Ripoli of Florence wrote this *collectarium* in my own hand. May God be praised and be blessed in your heart). (Figure 11).³⁵ The volume, now at the Columbia University Special Collections has yet to be contextualized within her full body of work. It is very rare to have two of the same works by one nun-scribe and a thorough comparative study of the texts, codicology, and paleography of two volumes will offer invaluable information about how Angela worked, which manuscript she completed first, her solo or collaborative work (if there are other hands in the manuscript), and who the audience was for both these collections of prayers. It is remarkable that she included her last name in many of her works (she names herself in a similar way in the colophons of her liturgical manuscripts). This may point to this larger trend in late fifteenth-century Italy, when nuns were increasingly identifying themselves by name. Angela di Lionardo Rucellai was from a poor branch of a very famous and wealthy merchant family, the Rucellai of Florence. In including her full name in Latin in so many of her manuscripts (all beautifully scribed in a formal Gothic bookhand), she may be signaling

³² From San Jacopo di Ripoli in Florence, see Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, MS 2102, folio i’v; from Paola a nun-scribe of Le Murate, see Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, MS 1794, folio 370r; from San Niccolò in Prato, see Prato, Conservatorio and Monastero di San Niccolò. See Moreton, “Pious Voices,” 46–47.

³³ Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS Conv. Soppr. D.7.344, folio 203v.

³⁴ The colophon is transcribed as it appears in the manuscript. The dealer’s catalog for this *Collectarium* notes a likely date of 1491 or later, based on the manuscript’s Calendar. Rucellai died in 1516 and was active through the late fifteenth century.

³⁵ New York City, Columbia University Special Collections, MS Western 112, folio 187v.

toward her distant family connections, with a desire for recognition or remembrance – in ways similar to that of Maria degli Albizzi, Piera di Medici, and others who felt marginalized. She is the young girl, mentioned previously, who came to the convent as a toddler (likely due to the death of her mother); she was educated at San Jacopo by the nuns (in a neighborhood dominated by the Rucellai), became a prolific senior scribe and prioress of her house, even leading her fellow sisters in following the strict reforms of Savonarola.³⁶ Her colophons offer much information about her level of education (composing in Latin, rather than simply copying), her evolving artistic work in the scriptorium, and her self-presentation to the world – whether the convent or the secular world beyond.

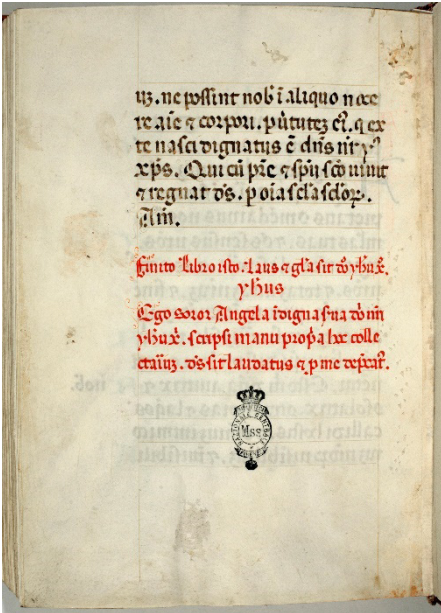


Figure 10. Left: Angela Rucellai's colophon in her *Collectarium*, c. 1500. Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, MS Conv. Soppr. D.7.344, f. 203v. Reproduced with permission.

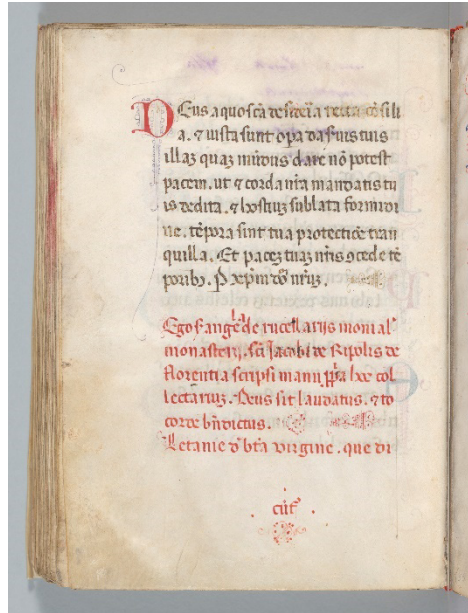


Figure 11. Right: Rucellai's colophon in another *Collectarium*, late 15th-century. New York City, Columbia University Special Collections, MS Western 112, f. 187v. Reproduced with permission.

Nuns sometimes mixed pious language in with extensive information about the extent of their work, presenting a complex image of women's work that was motivation both by piety and the desire to be recognized. In a note from 1553, Pratese nun-scribe and decorator Innocenza de Selmi (or Lelmi) refers to herself as "indegna" but also tells us that she went to great effort to complete the scribal work and decoration of her book – above and beyond her daily responsibilities in

³⁶ On Angela Rucellai, see Strocchia, "Savonarolan Witnesses."

the convent – challenging the notion that she is completely unworthy. She notes that she bore the expense of the materials required to produce the book, paid to have it bound and gives it to her sisters in the convent; in exchange, she asks that they sing a requiem mass for her after she dies, and to recite the penitential psalms.³⁷ Appeals for prayer are also seen, as expected – the nun asking the reader to pray for her, or referring to herself in the third person as “the scribe.” One spicy colophon combines an appeal to prayer with a threat.³⁸ After finishing her *Vita di sant’Eustachio*, a nun-scribe named Sara asks the reader to pray for her and threatens bodily harm if they do not! She states “Let whoever reads this devout life pray God for me, poor Sister Sara [...] and if you don’t I’ll strangle you when I’m dead (Qualunque persona leggerà questa divota leggenda prieghi Iddio per me soror Sara povera [...] che se voi nol farete quando sarò morta vi strangherò).”³⁹

COLOPHONS AND THE DESIRE FOR REMEMBRANCE

Scribal signatures, colophons where the copyist includes their name, were used increasingly by secular and religious scribes in Europe from the early fourteenth century onward.⁴⁰ In Italian nun-scribes’ books, these *sottoscrizioni* increased dramatically in the fifteenth century, as more educated women with graphic skills were placed in convent life and more texts with colophons were in circulation. The strict adherence to monastic piety that dictated anonymity for early medieval

³⁷ “Io suor Innocenza de Selmi da Prato indegna serva di Gesù à scripto, notato, miniato questo libro, guadagnato le carte e la legatura del libro, tutto sopra el suo lavoro ordinario, e ne fo un presente alle Cantore con pacti gli cantino una messa de morte el 7° giorno della sua sepultura e all’altre domanda per grazia una volta e 7 psalmi penitenziali. Mi arete excusat[a] non sta come vorrei. Nel’ anno del Signore 1553 alli 23 di novembre.” “I, Sister Innocenza Lelmi of Prato, unworthy servant of Jesus Christ, wrote out, copied the notes and decorated this book, paid for its paper and its binding, all in addition to her ordinary work, and I make a present of it to the singers on the condition that they sing for her a requiem mass on the seventh day after her burial, and she kindly asks the other nuns [to say] once the seven penitential psalms. Forgive me: it is not as I would wish. 23 November in the year of Our Lord 1553.” The manuscript is Prato, Conservatorio and Monastero di San Niccolò. The colophon is cited in Elissa Weaver, *Convent Theatre in Early Modern Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 36.

³⁸ Appeals for prayers are common in nun-scribes manuscripts. See a selection of these in *Literary Snippets: A Colophon Reader*. Moreton explores this extensively in her essay “Pious Voices: Nun-Scribes and the Language of Colophons,” 47, 51–53.

³⁹ Brian Richardson, *Women*, 100. Sara is the third of three scribes who copied out devotional texts for the book, adding her colophon on folio 134r (Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, MS 1381). See Teresa De Robertis and Rosella Miriello, *I manoscritti datati della Biblioteca Riccardiana di Firenze*, vol. 2 (Florence: Sismel, 1999), 55 and tav. CXXI.

⁴⁰ For information on the increased use of scribal signatures, see Pamela R. Robinson, *Catalogue of Dated and Datable Manuscripts c.737–1600 in Cambridge Libraries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 5–12.

scribes is no longer at work in the later Middle Ages and early modern period. We hear from nuns themselves, working north of the Alps in the late fifteenth century, that as long as the convent's scribes include their names in their books for the purpose of being remembered by their sisters, and not out of vanity, it is proper and will benefit their souls.⁴¹ Remembrance is certainly a motivating factor for Italian nun-scribes. One colophon, from Angela Rucellai and Lucrezia Panciatichi of the Observant Dominican convent of San Jacopo di Ripoli, notes the scribes' wish to be remembered in the *libro della vita*: "Iste liber scriptus fuit a duabus sororibus monasterii sancti Iacobi de Ripolis ad honorem domini nostri yesu Christi Nomina carorum fuit Suor Angela et Suor Lucretia quas deus scribat in libro vite" (This book was written by two sisters of the monastery of San Jacopo di Ripoli in honor of our Lord Jesus Christ, whose names, Sister Angela and Sister Lucretia, may God inscribe in the Book of Life).⁴² The manuscript was a gradual, completed about 1500 by the accomplished team of the aforementioned Angela di Leonardo Rucellai (who completed the scribal work) and her close colleague in the convent scriptorium, Lucrezia di Francesco Panciatichi (who notated the music). Knowing that their sisters would see their names in this large liturgical manuscript, sung communally from the church choir, was a form of regular remembrance within their community that would continue after their death.

Colophon formulas, passed down within the scriptorium from senior scribes to novices, were also a way that nuns remembered and paid homage to respected elders within their community. Ginevra di Lorenzo Lenzi (d.1546) or Suor Cleofe, the name she took upon accepting formal vows, was an active scribe at the Bridgettine house of the Paradiso in Florence from the 1480s into the early 1500s. She became the second most prolific copyist at her house; only her teacher, Suor Raffaella (Raffaella di Arnolfo Bardi), produced more manuscripts. Mentoring through scribal teamwork is a common theme seen in Italian convent scriptoria and throughout Europe, with two or more nuns producing texts together.⁴³ Cleofe and Raffaella's

⁴¹ This is a note from a nun-scribe of the convent of St. Katherina in St. Gall, writing in the convent chronicle. Winston-Allen, *Convent Chronicles: Women Writing About Women and Reform in the Late Middle Ages* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004), 174.

⁴² The colophon is transcribed as it appears in the manuscript. Florence, Museo di San Marco, MS 630, folio 259.

⁴³ There is much to be said about teamwork within the scriptorium and many instances of this in Italian and other convent scriptoria in Europe. Notator-scribe duos and decorator-scribe teams are also known, such scribe Angela di Lionardo Rucellai and notator Lucrezia Panciatichi of San Jacopo di Ripoli, and Gostanza Cocchi of Sant'Ambrogio Florence who collaborated with fellow nun and miniaturist Angela di Antonio da Rabatta to produce their breviary of 1518 (Florence Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana Conv. Sopp. 90). On Rucellai, see Strocchia "Savonarolan Witnesses..."; on the Sant'Ambrogio example, see Strocchia, "Sis-

close working relationship⁴⁴ is evident in their manuscripts and in the colophon language they chose. They both used the phrase “*faticha et disagio*” when finishing a text, noting that the work was completed with much “labor and discomfort.”⁴⁵ Within a prolific convent scriptorium, active for almost a century, they are the only Paradiso nun-scribes to use this language, which would have signaled important lineages and elicited acts of remembrance by future nuns of their house when reading the texts they had produced.

SELF-IDENTIFICATION AND TEXTUAL GENRE

As a general rule, liturgical manuscripts were less likely to include colophons and when they have colophons, they are less likely to include a nun by name – perhaps because these were destined to be communal texts and not meant to be associated with an individual (the Rucellai-Panciatichi team is an exception). Paraliturgical texts such as Books of Hours and breviaries more commonly included the name of the convent where they were made since they cross into the category of devotional manuscripts, which are much more likely to include colophons – some quite lengthy. The production of books of hours and personal breviaries became a thriving convent industry; books were sold to lay women across a socio-economic range, depending on cost, which was determined by the level of scribal work and decoration. For some, the naming of a scribe or their house may have been akin to leaving a calling card in the book, letting others know who made it and where to find another one.⁴⁶ Devotional manuscripts contain the widest range of colophons: those that include scribal self-identification (sharing information on kinship, social sta-

ters in Spirit: The Nuns of Sant’ Ambrogio and Their Consorority in Early Sixteenth-Century Florence,” *Sixteenth Century Journal* 33, no. 3 (Autumn 2002): 735–67.

⁴⁴ The phrase is used in numerous manuscripts from nun-scribes Cleofe and Raffaella of the Paradiso, noted in this essay. On Cleofe and Raffaella, see Miriello, *I manoscritti del Monastero del Paradiso di Firenze*.

⁴⁵ Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze, MS II.III.270, folio 137v. The colophon also notes that the book was written by the light of an oil lamp and provides a date of 1495. “Fu conpiuto di scrivere a dì 26 aprile nel M 495. Fu scritto con molta fatica e con molto disagio la maggior parte al lume di lucerna, et però chi ll’acacta con diligença si lo tenga et alle monache del Paradiso si llo renda. Amen.” (The writing of this book was finished on the 26th of April 1495. It was written with extreme effort and great discomfort, the major part by the light of an oil lamp and let it be advised to those who hold to keep it with respect and to the nuns of the Paradiso return it. Amen). See *Literary Snippets: A Colophon Reader* for more examples of this colophon.

⁴⁶ Convent scribes such as the Benedictines of Le Murate in Florence, the Observant Franciscans of Santa Maria di Monteluca in Perugia, the Augustinian Hermits of San Gaggio in Florence, produced Books of Hours during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. This production is attested to in their colophons, convent chronicles, and account books noting the sale of books to clients and the purchase of writing materials for the scriptorium.

tus, name, place of production), those that vary in length (the longer the colophon, the less likely the nun is to name herself), those that change in language between Latin to the vernacular (devotional manuscripts, most often written in the vernacular, would often include a Latin phrase to the end to formalize the text and perhaps demonstrate some degree of Latin literacy), and those that demonstrate self-expression (poetry, decoration).⁴⁷

CONCLUSIONS

Colophon language connected scribes to important lineages within the convent and allowed them to express a range of identities – from pious and unworthy scribe (even if she had paid for all the writing materials herself!) to proud member of an important civic family. The space at the end of a completed manuscript for a colophon was a place set aside and sanctioned for crafting an identity to present to the world. Since books were used inside the convent for generations and since convent industries produced books for sale to other religious houses and secular clientele, the audience for these metatexts was quite large and lasted far beyond the lifetime of the scribe. For women who had little opportunity for self-expression and no earthly heirs, these subtle and sometimes not so subtle statements provide tremendous insight into their lives and how they wanted to be remembered. And we are still reading them – and remembering them – 500 years later.

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⁴⁷ These are explored in depth in Moreton, “Pious Voices.”

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A COLLECTION OF FRAGMENTARY COLOPHONS: MANUSCRIPTS FROM THE MONASTERY OF SAINT MACARIUS

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INTRODUCTION

The monastery of Saint Macarius had a very rich library which reflects the intellectual life of this monastery during the Middle Ages.² Foreign travelers began to acquire the manuscripts of this library around the seventeenth century,³ of which a few catalogs have appeared.⁴ The monastery fell into decline around the fifteenth century, and the ceremony of the coction of the Myron stopped taking place in this monastery. The monasteries of Saint Anthony and Saint Paul provided the Coptic Church with almost all the prelates with the exception of Demetrius II (1862–1870) who was abbot of Saint Macarius before becoming patriarch.⁵

In 1969 Pope Cyril (Kyrillos) VI ordered Father Matta al-Maskin and his followers to abandon the desert of Wadi al-Rayan and settle in the Monastery of Saint Macarius. The monks began restoring buildings and constructing new ones. During this restoration campaign, several fragments were found. They were put in cardboard boxes. Father Zanetti drew up an inventory of the manuscripts of the monas-

¹ I am grateful to the late Bishop Epiphanius and Fr. Berty who allowed me to study these fragments.

² Cf. H. Evelyn White, *The Monasteries of the Wadi 'N Natrun, New Coptic Texts from the Monastery of Saint Macarius*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Egyptian Expedition, New York 1926, Part I, reprinted by Arno Press 1973, p. xxxvii–xlii.

³ O.V. Volkoff, *A la recherche des manuscrits en Egypte*, Recherches d'archéologie de philologie et d'histoire 30, Cairo 1970.

⁴ L. Stork, *Koptische Handschriften 2*, Verzeichnis der Orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland XXI/2 Stuttgart 1995.

⁵ Mounir Shoucri, "Demetrius II" *CE* 3, p. 893.

tery as well as some articles, and he prepared a catalog raisonné which is still unpublished. He added a manuscript supplement. The studies of Father Zanetti touch only on complete manuscripts.⁶

During a visit to the monastery, the monks were kind enough to allow me to study some fragments. Our project consists of putting the fragments in groups (Bible, Hagiography, etc.), then reviewing each group in order to allow the fragments to be grouped together. We present a gleanings of some colophons and notes from readers that will contribute to our knowledge of the history of this monastery.⁷

It is worth mention that the Arabic colophons did not attract the attention of scholars like those in Coptic Sahidic.⁸

COLOPHON 1

A

طالع هذا الكتاب
المبارك العبد المسكين
الخطاطي الذي ما يستحق
يستحق ان يسما اسمه في
هذا الكتاب رافايل المحرق في
سنة للشهدا

ⲁⲚⲐⲃⲔ

This blessed book was read by the poor sinner, the slave (of God) who is not worthy to be named in this book, Raphael of Muharraq in 1202 AM

Commentary

The date of the note is 1486 AD, the history of the patriarchs of the Coptic Church does not give any information on this period.

This note does not show if Raphael from the monastery of Muharraq was passing through or he lived in the monastery of Saint Macarius. Since he had access to the library, we believe he lived there.

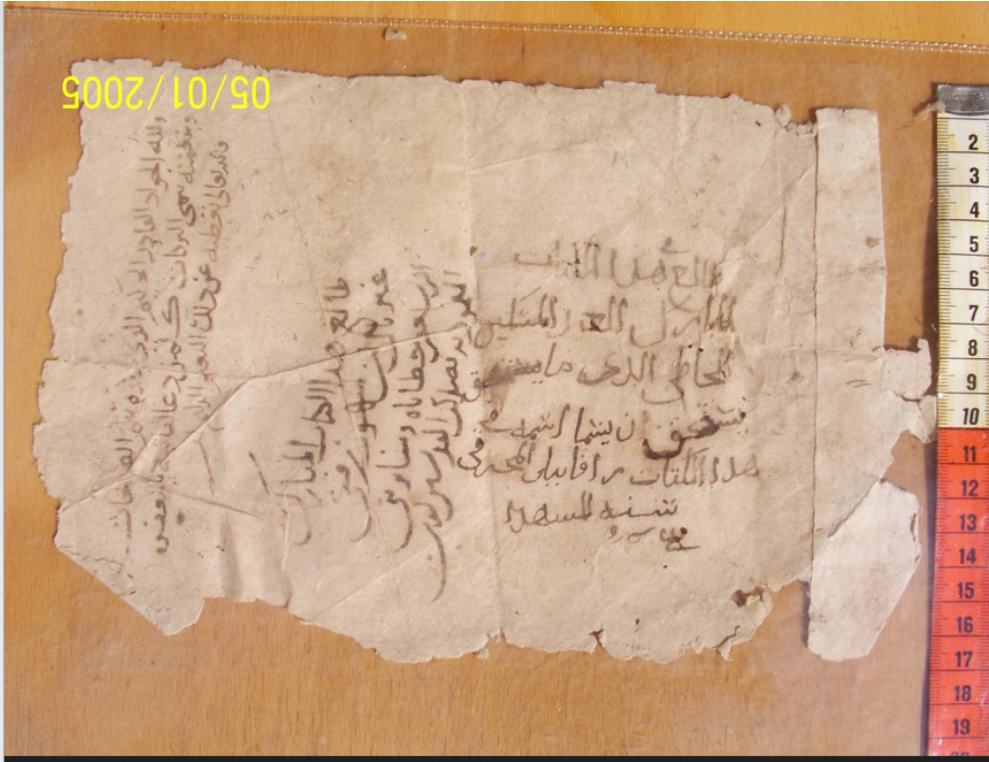
It should be noted that Raphaël wrote his name with an Aleph and not a Waw (Rufail).

⁶ U. ZANETTI, "Liturgy at Wadi Natrun", *Coptica* 2 (2003) p. 122–141, et en particulier p. 124 note 5.

⁷ For the monastery, see the seminal study by H. G. EVELYN-WHITE, *The Monasteries of the Wadi'n Natrun*, part 2, *The History of the New York* 1932.

⁸ A. Van Lantschoot, *Recueil des Colophons des Manuscrits Chrétiens d'Égypte*.

It should be noted that the monastery provided during the fifteenth century, three patriarchs namely Matta I (1378–1408),⁹ Matta II (1452–1465)¹⁰ and John XII (1480–1483).¹¹



B

طالع هذا الكتاب المبارك
 غبريال ابن ميهوب زفتي
 الرب يغفر خطاياها ساير بني
 المعمودية بصلوات القديسين امين

⁹ Subhi Y. Labib, "Matthew 1," *Coptic Encyclopedia*, A. S. Atiya (ed.), volume 5, New York: McMillan 1991, p. 1569a–1570b

¹⁰ Subhi Y. Labib, "Matthew II," *Coptic Encyclopedia*, A. S. Atiya (ed.), volume 5, New York: McMillan 1991, p. 1571a

¹¹ Subhi Y. Labib, "John XII," *Coptic Encyclopedia*, A. S. Atiya (ed.), volume 4, New York: McMillan 1991, p. 1346a–1346b.

This blessed book was read by Gabriel ibn Mayhub, Zifta,¹² May the Lord forgive his sins and all the children of the baptism Amen, through the prayers of the saints Amen!

Commentary

The critical dots are absent in the text which makes the reading difficult.

It seems that this Gabriel was contemporary to the bishop of Zifta¹³ who was ordained by the patriarch John XIII (1484–1524).¹⁴ This diocese, like that of Cyprus, was created in the fourteenth century.

Unfortunately this Gabriel did not leave any date; however, it seems that he read the manuscript before Raphael as his signature is preceding this.

COLOPHON 2

اذكر يارب عبدك كاتب هذ طروح[ات
اذكر يارب القاري والناسخ في فردوس [النعيم
من منبرك الف وواحد لزمان وللشهدا]
عوض المسكين كاتب هوللي وقفه
هذه الطوبين نفسه على دير بعد

بسم الله حضر
سلام لسائر

Remember o Lord, Your slave, the scribe of this Turuhat
Remember o Lord the reader and the scribe in the Paradise [of joy
In Your tribune, one thousand and one from the martyrs
Reward the poor scribe who endowed it
This (?) for himself and his monastery after

In the name of God, he was present
Peace of all...

¹² For Zifta cf. S. TIMM, *Das christlich-koptische Agypten in arabischer Zeit*, Beihefte zum Tübingen Atlas des Vorderen Orients 41/4, Wiesbaden 1988, p. 1669–1670.

¹³ Youhanna Nessim Youssef, “Bishop Mark of Zifta and His *Urguza*,” *Coptica* 8 (2009), p. 69–79.

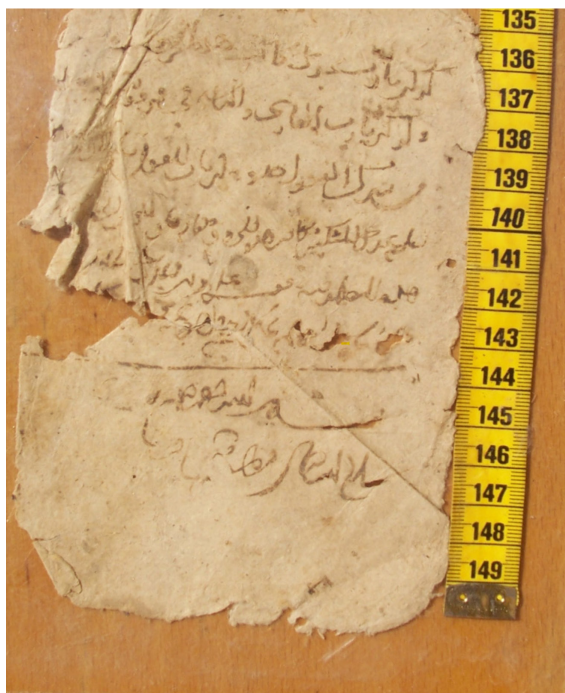
¹⁴ A. KHATER–O.H.E. BURMESTER, *History of the Patriarchs of the Egyptian Church*, Textes et documents XIII, Vol. III, part III, Cairo 1970, fol. 257r. p. 159 (text), p. 274 (translation).

Commentary

The handwriting is poor and hard to decipher.

The book of Turuhat is a liturgical book of the Coptic Church, which could be either for saints¹⁵ or for special occasions such as the holy. Unfortunately, the fragment does not precise the nature of the book¹⁶

The third line gives the date 1001 AM (= 1285 AD); this date corresponds to the patriarchate of John VII¹⁷ who suffered from persecution of the sultan



COLOPHON 3

اذكر يارب عبدك الخاطي المسكين الغارق في [بحار

¹⁵ O.H.E. Burmester, "The Turûhât of the saints (Tût, Bâbah, Hatûr)," *Bulletin de la Société d'Archéologie Copte* 4 (1938) p. 141–194.

¹⁶ O.H.E. Burmester, "Tûrûhat of the Coptic Church," *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 3, (1937) p. 78–109, 505–549.

¹⁷ O.H.E. Burmester and A. Khater, *History of the Patriarchs of the Egyptian Church known as the History of the Holy Church*, Textes et Documents, 13, Cairo: Publications de la Société d'Archéologie Copte 1970, fol 237r-v, p. 229–230 (translation), p. 134 (Text). Subhi Y. Labib, "John VII," *Coptic Encyclopedia*, A. S. Atiya (ed.), volume 4, New York: McMillan 1991, p. 1342b–1343b.

الخطايا والذنوب الذي ما يستحق ان يذكر اسم[مه
 [لاسم يوحنا اخي القمص شنوده الزعيم اكومنت[وس
 خطايا كل من دعا له يغفر له خطاياهم من]
 والجميع والرب الاله يعوضهم بغفران خطاياهم في
 ملكوت[السموات بصلوات الشهداء والقديسين امين
 وكل من قرأ] في هذه الاجبية وذكره في صلواته الرب الاله
 يعوضه في ملكوت السموات امين والشكر لله دائما امين

Remember O Lord, you sinner slave, who is sinking in the seas
 Of the sins and transgressions, who does not deserve to mention his name
 By name John the brother of Šenūdah al-Zaim the Hegumen
 His sins. And whoever prays for him, let his sins be forgiven
 And all, the Lord God may reward them the forgiveness of their sins
 In the heavenly Kingdom through the prayers of the Martyrs and the Saints Amen!
 And whoever will read in this Agpia (Horologion) and mentions him in his prayers
 The Lord God
 Will reward him in the heavenly Kingdom Amen, Thanks be to God forever Amen!

Commentary

As this book is for private use, the dimensions are small.

It is not clear whether “John the brother of Šenūdah” refers to the scribe, owner, or sponsor.



COLOPHON 4

ΠΑΘ̅C̅ ΙΗC̅ ΠΧC̅ ΝΑΙ ΝΗΙ

هذا الكتاب المبارك وقفنا موبدا وحبسا
 مخلداً على بيعة القديس العظيم مقاريوس
 برية شيهات لا يباع ولا يشترا ولا يرهن ولا
 يوهب ولا يعار ولا يقايض بد وكلمن تجرا على
 هذا يكون مداناً من الله سبحانه وسلام الرب
 يحل على الاولاد الطايعين والسبح لله امين
 كتبه الحقيقير في الكهنة يوحنا المس []
 بتاريخ سنة الف وثمانين
 للشهدا الاطهار

My Lord Jesus Christ have mercy upon me

This blessed book is an eternal endowment and inalienable bequest to the church of the great saint Macarius in the desert of Scetis (Šihîṭ). It could not be ever sold or bought or taken as pledge or given or borrowed or exchanged. Whoever dares to do this will be condemned from God, let Him be praised. May the peace of the Lord come upon the obedient children. Praise be to God. Amen!

Written by the humble among the priests John the []
 In the year 1080 of the pure martyrs (= 1364 AD)

Commentary

The scribe used middle Arabic such as يشترا instead of يشتري, كلمن instead of كل من

The hamza is completely absent in the whole text such as for the words موبدا تجرا للشهدا الطايعين



COLOPHON 5

الحمد لله العلي
 اطلع على كتاب المبارك الذي هو سير الابا القديسين
 وترتيب السجدة العبد الخاطي الذليل القاصر علم وعمل
 سوريال بالاسم كاهن وراهب في دير القديس مقاريوس
 وكان ذلك في يوم الاحد المبارك ثالث من شهر بابة
 سنة للشهدا الموافق سنة [...] للهجرة والمجد لله دائما ابديا امين

Thanks be to the High God

The sinner, humble slave, the incapable in knowledge and deeds, Suriel, a priest by name and a monk in the monastery of Saint Macarius, had a look upon this blessed book which is the biographies of the Saints and the rite of Genuflection, this took place on the blessed Sunday the 3rd of the month of Babah 1317 of the year of the martyrs which corresponds to the year [...] of the Hijra, Glory be to God forever and eternally Amen

Commentary

The collection of this book seems bizarre – combining in one volume a liturgical book and the lives of saints.

The date is not clear.



COLOPHON 6

طالع في هذه المصحف المبارك الذي هو تاريخ
 الابا البطارقة الرب يجعل لنا نصيب
 مع من فاز منهم بالاعمال المرضية لله العبد الحقير
 المعرف بالذنب والتقصير الراجي عون القدير الذي لا يستحق
 ان يدعا انسانا بجملة لاجل كثرة خطاياها وهو
 يسال كل من واقف على ان يدعوا له بالمغفرة والمساحة ومن قال شي

الرب يعوضه اضعاف في ملكوت السماوات
 بال محمد جرجس جريس
 المعروف بابن ابراهيم

This blessed book which is the history of the fathers the patriarchs, may the Lord make us a share with those who won among the good deeds, the humble slave, who is known by his offence and limitation, that who hopes the help of the Mighty, who does not deserve to be called a man at all because the multitude of his sins and he beseeches whoever will find to pray for the forgiveness and the pardon and who will say the Lord will reward him manifolds in the heavenly Kingdom
 Mohammed George (Jirgis) Grace
 Known as Son of Abraham (Ibn Ibrahim)

Commentary

The *History of the Patriarchs* was translated in the monastery of Saint Macarius; unfortunately we do not know which recension of the work this reader used.

The most important thing is the name of the reader Mohammed (if our reading is correct this may indicate that he was a convert to Christianity)



COLOPHON 7

بسم الله الرووف الرحيم

والشكر لله دائما ابديا
 هذا الكتاب المبارك وقفنا موبدا وحبسا مخلدا
 على الكنيسة الكبرى بدير القديس مقاريوس
 ببرية شيهات كلهن فرط فيه واخرجه عن ملك
 البيعة المذكورة يكون مدانا ومحروما من رجا
 الرب ورحمته ويكون نصيبه مع المخالفين
 الكفار ويكون نصيبه مع يهوذا الاسخريوطي
 وسيمون الساحر وسلام الرب يحل على بني
 الطاعة والحدز ثم الحدز من المخالفة وعلى بني
 الطاعة تحل البركة امين نسخ يوم سادس عشر يوانه (?)

ⲁⲚⲈ

In the name of God the merciful and pitiful

Thanks be to God forever and eternally

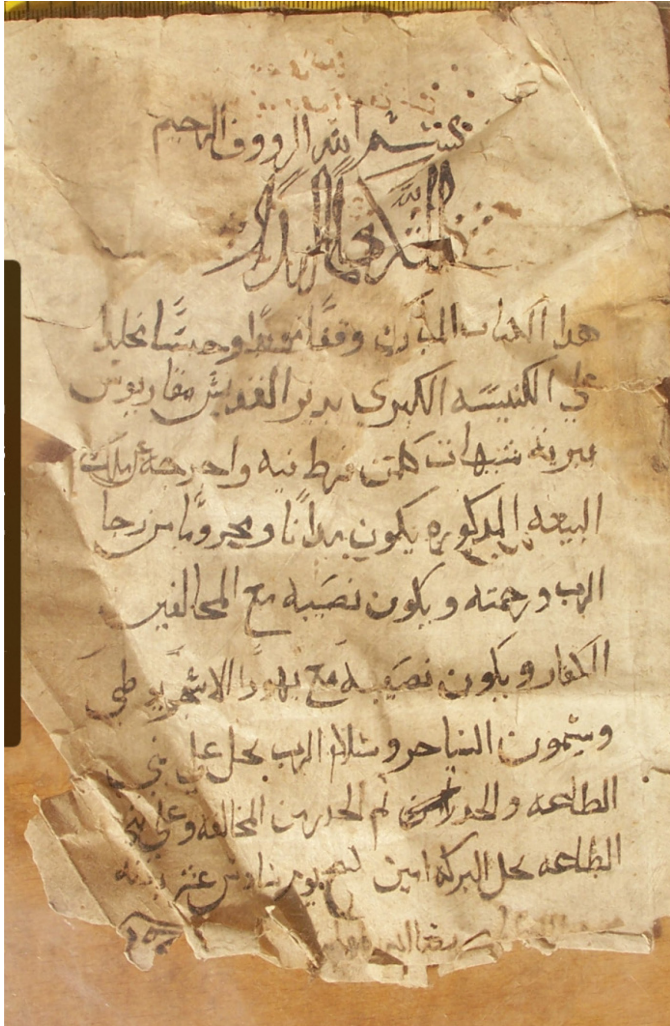
This blessed book is an eternal endowment and inalienable bequest to the great church of the monastery of Saint Macarius in the desert of Scetis (Šihît). Whoever gave up it and took out of the property of the mentioned church, let him be judged and excommunicated from the hope of the Lord, let his share be with the transgressors and the unfaithful and let his share be with Judah Ischariot, and Simon the Magician. Let the peace of the Lord be upon the sons, take care and take care not to transgress and let the blessing come upon the sons of obedience, 1305

Copied on the 16 of Baunah 1305 AM (= 1589 AD)

Commentary

The format of the book and the beautiful handwriting lead us to believe that this book was a liturgical book. In addition to this, the endowment is for the church of Saint Macarius and not the monastery.

The date of the manuscript shows that it was copied in the 'dark age', as we do not possess any information about the monastery or even about the patriarchs of that time.



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COLOPHONS OF MEDIEVAL ARMENIAN MANUSCRIPTS AS SOURCES FOR WOMEN'S HISTORY

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Having developed into a distinct literary genre in the early Middle Ages, the colophons of Armenian manuscripts provide valuable insights into the lived reality of people in different Armenian communities spread across Europe and Asia. They offer us rare glimpses into the lives and worldview of people from all walks of life, often offering eyewitness accounts of historical events that took place in the vicinity of their communities. Numerous colophons contain commemorations of women who are primarily remembered owing to their belonging to the nearest circle of the scribe or the sponsor of the manuscript (mother, wife, sister, sister-in-law etc.). Moreover, there are many colophons that commemorate women who sponsored manuscripts or performed remarkable deeds that were considered worthy of remembrance. This paper discusses such mentions of women in the colophons and explores the colophons' significance as primary sources for women's history and, potentially, for gender studies.

INTRODUCTION

From the early Middle Ages onwards the practice of colophon writing in the Armenian tradition developed immensely, transforming it into a separate literary genre with its own characteristic features,¹ many of which are truly unique as compared

* For the transliteration of Armenian words and names the Hübschmann–Meillet–Benveniste system used by the *Revue des Études Arméniennes* has been adopted for the present paper. All the translations from Classical and Modern Armenian are mine, unless indicated otherwise.

¹ For more details, see Baxč'inyan, "Jeřagreri hiřatakaraner".

to the colophons in other traditions. The etymology of the Armenian term for colophon – *yišatakararan* (յիշատակարան) – provides us with the key to understanding the main function of colophons in the Armenian tradition. The word *yišatakararan*, which contains morphemes borrowed from Iranian languages, literally means ‘a place of memory’ (commemoration, memorial) and suggests that the part of the manuscript in which the colophon was inserted was specifically conceived as a space where commemorative notes mentioning certain people, both women and men, religious and lay, and events worthy of commemoration were created and preserved.²

The structure of the colophon became relatively fixed already in the tenth century, but scribes, who were mainly low-ranking clergy, had relative freedom in choosing what to include or omit from their text. The principle colophon, composed at the completion of the manuscript, would usually contain most of the following information: doxology, name(s) of the sponsor(s), mentions of ruler(s) and church leaders, place and time of the composition, historical data, curses and / or blessings, and the ‘remember’ part.³

The most significant section for everyone involved in the production of the manuscript was the ‘remember’ section, for it contained a passionate and repeated plea from scribes urging their readers to remember in their virtuous prayers a number of people, both living and dead. Through these prayers, Armenians believed, the chances of inheriting the Kingdom of Heaven increased, for Christ would have mercy on them at his second coming.⁴ The list, often quite a long one, usually includes the names of not only the scribes themselves but also of the members of their extended family, of the sponsors of the manuscript and their kin, of their colleagues, of people who in one way or another assisted them in their work

² See Sirinian, “On the Historical and Literary Value”, p. 65.

³ Mat’evosyan, *Hayeren jeragreri hišatakarannerə*, pp. 21–26. For a detailed examination of each of these sections, see Harut’yunyan, *Hayeren Jeragreri Hišatakarannerə*, pp. 84–197.

⁴ This is a dominant theme in Armenian colophons, which is discussed in more detail in my forthcoming book *Lived Reality in Medieval Anatolia and the Caucasus through the Colophons of Armenian Manuscripts* to be published in the *British Academy Monographs* series (Oxford University Press). To demonstrate the thinking behind the ‘remember’ part, here is one example from the colophon of the Gospel manuscript copied in 1375: Այժմ, աղապեն զամենեսեան զդասս լուսերամից, որք հանդիպիք այսմ աստուածային խրախնանութեան, յիշեսցիք ի մաքրափայլ աղաթս ձեր զփափագմամբ ստացաւդ սորա [...] Եւ որ սրտի մտաւք եւ յաւժարական սիրով յիշեսցէ զյիշատակեալքս ի սմա, յիշեալ յիցի եւ նա ի Քրիստոսէ աստուծոյ մերոյ, որ է աւրինեալ յաւիտ[եանս]: Եւ որ հաւատով զամենն ասասցէ, նմա ողորմեսցի Քրիստոս ի միւսանգամ զալստեան իւրոյ, ամէն: (“I now implore every member of the celestial chorus that may come across this divine feast to remember in your virtuous prayers the eager recipient of this [...] And may those, who with heartfelt thoughts and genuine love remember the ones mentioned here, also be remembered in Christ our Lord, who is eternally blessed. And may Christ in his next coming have mercy on those who will say all of this with faith. Amen”) (Xač’ikyan, *ŽD dari*, no. 639, pp. 517–518).

and so on. Thus, the colophons served as a means for the scribes to perpetuate the memory of people whom they and the sponsors held dear and to show their genuine appreciation for the support they received. The colophons also become a sort of prosopographical archive which often allows us to reconstruct parts of family trees and networks of people within a community and beyond.

Numerous colophons contain commemorations of women. Most commonly, women are remembered owing to their belonging to the nearest circle of the scribe or the sponsor of the manuscript (mother, wife, sister, sister-in-law etc.). However, there are also many colophons that remember women who sponsored manuscripts or performed remarkable deeds that were considered worthy of remembrance. Albeit very few in numbers, we also possess some colophons composed by women. This paper aims at highlighting the colophons' significance as primary sources for women's history and, potentially, for gender history. To demonstrate it, I shall examine five colophons composed between twelfth and fifteenth centuries, which reveal compelling details about women's life in medieval Armenia.

THE GOSPEL OF SASUN (1169/70 CE)

The colophon of the Gospel of Sasun (1169/70 CE⁵) was copied by the nineteenth-century Armenian scholar Garegin Srvanjtjanc' in 1879 from the original manuscript⁶ which was lost during the Armenian Genocide. A second, virtually identical copy of the same colophon was preserved in the seventeenth-century Jerusalem MS 725.⁷ It is a relatively lengthy colophon of several pages written by the scribe Aristakēs in the monastery of the Holy Saviour near Sasun. Aristakēs follows the standard structure of an Armenian colophon with the doxology, information about the sponsor and her family, historical section, and the plea for remembrance. What interests us here is the historical section, the details about the sponsor's family, and the circumstances of the creation of the manuscript. From the perspective of women's history, the text contains descriptions of the life of noble women in the twelfth century as seen by a well-educated monk, who was commissioned to copy the manuscript.

⁵ The dates in the colophons are usually, but not exclusively, given in accordance with the Great Armenian Era, which begins on 11 July 552 CE. To find the date that corresponds to the Common Era, we need to add 551, which gives us a year that starts in summer and continues into the next year: hence, the use of slashed figures to indicate the year in line with the Common Era. For more details, see Abrahamyan, *Hayoc' Gir*, pp. 112–114.

⁶ Srvanjtjanc', *T'oros Atbar*, pp. 308–318.

⁷ Hovsep'yan, *Yišatakarank'*, pp. 397–406. There are some minor differences between the two versions of the colophon: Srvandjtyanc's text, for example, has an additional paragraph in the 'glory' section and the spelling of proper names is slightly different. For the sake of consistency, Srvandjtyanc's version and the most common spelling of the names will be used in this paper.

According to the scribe, the manuscript was sponsored by Queen Melek'set' in memory of her daughter, Kata, who passed away during the labour while giving birth to twins. Melek'set' is presented as “the blessed Christ-loving Queen Mel-ek'set', Vigēn's spouse, who is from the Arcruni family and from the line of Saint Vardan [Mamikonean]”.⁸ Her husband, Vigēn, did not have any royal blood and was presented as the Lord of Sasun, “the great Patuelēsimos”,⁹ that is *prōtonōbelisimos* (πρωτωνωβελισσιμος), a title conferred on supreme military commanders by the Byzantines from the twelfth century onwards. A question may then arise: why does the scribe call Melek'set' “Queen”? Is it ascribed to her owing to her royal Arcruni heritage, even though the Arcrunis had long lost their authority and power in the neighbouring Vaspurakan? Interestingly, Kata, their daughter, is also referred to as the “Queen” after her marriage to Šahinšah, “the son of Grigor, the grandson of Katakalos, son of Kamen the Great, in the province of Tegk', in the great castle called Sałuk”.¹⁰ Kata's husband's family seems to have had Byzantine roots, but again no links to royalties.

There could be two explanations for the use of the title of the queen: 1) the *t'aguhi* substituted or was interchangeably used with the word *tikin* – an honorary title which was applied to refer to both the queen and the lady (or the great lady) of the clan; 2) *t'aguhi* literary means “a woman who wears a crown” and is the feminine form of the noun *t'agawor* – ‘king’, and it is not unreasonable to assume that the most high-ranking woman in a noble family wore a crown or a tiara. Nevertheless, when describing Melek'set' the scribe does not mention any crown on her head, but, as we shall see below, only pearls braided into her hair. I will therefore suggest that the word *t'aguhi* was primarily used as an honorary title for Melek'set' both to identify her as the great lady of the household and to underscore her royal Arcruni ancestry, which continued to form an important part of the Arcruni identity long after the abolition of their kingdom.

Melek'set' is, in general, presented as a powerful landlady, who must have sponsored the manuscript with her own money, for only she is mentioned as its sponsor. For the scribe, Melek'set's authority stems from three sources: her ancestry, her marriage, and her devotion to God. She is described as someone who

pursued all virtues, decorating not only her golden locks entwined with pearls and precious gems, or her clothes laced with gold, the source of pride for the minds of royal women, but alongside her bodily greatness she was also endowed with spiritual virtue, holiness, modesty, humility, the purity of fasting, and the daily prayer; she was the decorator of churches and the protector of priests, the

⁸ Srvanjtianc', *T'oros Ałbar*, p. 309: Հրամանաւ երանելի եւ Քրիստոսասէր թագուհւոյ Մէլէքսէթոյ ամուսնոյ Վիգէնոյ, որ է յազգէ Արծրունի եւ ի շատաւիղէ սրբոյն Վարդանայ.

⁹ Ibid., Վիգէնոյ մեծի Պատուելեսիմոսի.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 313: Շահինշահի որդւոյ Գրիգորի թոռին Կատակալոսի որդւոյ Կամենի մեծի, ի Դեգէաց գաւառ ի մեծ ամրոցն որ կոչի Մաղուկ.

guardian of the holy and the widows, dressing the naked and feeding the hungry, and [endowed] with many other virtues resembling the first saints, who followed Christ's call and apostolic preaching.¹¹

The initial description of Melek'set's appearance gives us a hint of noble women's fashion choices, whereas the subsequent praise of her spiritual qualities reflect the clerics' or maybe even the society's expectations of the nobility in general: devoutness, humility, protection and support of the Church, helping the destitute – all these qualities are ascribed by the scribe to both female and male members of Melek'set's family, including her husband, her daughter Kata, and her son Č'orduanēl.

The colophon also contains compelling information about marriage and childbirth among the nobility. Thus, we are told that Melek'set had her several children of whom many passed away at a very young age. Giving birth to children appears to have been women's primary role in society, for we can see the same in the description of Kata's life, which seems to follow a pre-written scenario, in which she has no or very little say. Kata is given into marriage to an influential landlord to forge a new alliance (or strengthen an existing one), and the scribe tells us that her wish was to have many children. She had already one child when she became pregnant again, this time with twins. It was during her second labour that she passed away.

It should, however, be mentioned that Kata's brother Č'orduanēl also had little say in his marriage. The scribe tells us that “having held a council and wishing to increase the size of their clan, they [Melek'set and Vigēn's family] marry him to the daughter of Vasil, the brother of the Armenian Catholicos Lord Grigorios [Grigor III Pahlavuni (r. 1113–1166)], the mighty and the great, whose name is Vaninē.”¹²

Another interesting motive that can be discerned in the colophon is a repeated allusion to and citations from the Bible. When speaking about the motivation behind Melek'set sponsoring the manuscript, the scribe draws parallels between her and the merchant from Matthew 13:45, who is “in search of fine pearls”:

¹¹ Ibid., p. 310: գամենայն առաքինութեանց զհետ երթեալ, եւ զարդարեալ ոչ միայն ի հիւսս ոսկեմանս ընդելուզեալ մարգարտով եւ ակամբք պատուականաւք, կամ ի հանդերձս ոսկեհուռս հպարտացուցանողս զմիտս կանանց թագաւորականց, այլ սա զկնի մարմնական մեծութեան՝ ստացեալ եւ զհոգեւոր առաքինութիւն, զսրբութիւն, զհամեստութիւն զխոնարհութիւն, զպահս սրբութեան եւ զաղաւթս հանապագորդս, եկեղեցեաց զարդարիչ եւ քահանայից յանձանձիչ, որբոց եւ այրեաց ինամաժու, զմերկս զզեցուցանելով եւ զքաղցեալս կերակրելով. եւ այլ բազում առաքինութեամբ, ըստ արինակի առաջին սրբոցն որ ընթացան զկնի Բրիստոսի կոչմանն եւ առաքելական քարոզութեանն.

¹² Ibid., p. 312: խորհուրդ ի մէջ առեալ անեցուցանել կամելով զշառաւիղ ազգին իւրեանց, փեսայացուցանեն զնա ընդ դուստր Վասլի եղբար տեառն Գրիգորիսի Հայոց կաթուղիկոսի, հզարի եւ մեծի, որոյ անուն Վանինէ նանայի.

she went on a quest for this fine pearl which cannot be exchanged with anything existing. She bought this with money and received eternal greatness, and it remained as a memorial in the place of her daughter, as if they saw her alive when they saw it and read from it.¹³

The manuscript is perceived as the “fine pearl”, a living memorial which is, symbolically, to take the place of Kata. This allusion to the parable of the Kingdom of Heaven is a common topos found in many colophons, and another example is given below.

Furthermore, while describing Melek‘set‘ and her relations with her husband, the scribe says,

[...] as Paul – the herald of Tarsus, the chosen vessel, the herald of the universe – says in his teaching, “Wives, be subject to your husbands in everything as you are to the Lord” [Eph. 5:22] and “husbands, love your wives as you do your own bodies” [Eph. 5:28]. And these most commendable blessed ones in accordance with the apostolic advice and according to Christ’s commandments lived together like one flesh [Eph. 5:31] in holy and virtuous matrimony [...]¹⁴

The allusion to Pauline teaching establishes a certain hierarchy: the wife should be subject to her husband, and the husband should love her as his own body. Considering the fact that Melek‘set‘ was undoubtedly aware of the content of the colophon, this interpretation of familial bonds must have been the one promoted by the Church and reinforced by the patriarchal institutions.

To summarise, the formulaic language of this colophon and a substantial number of Biblical references portrays the world of the twelfth-century Melek‘set‘’s family through the eyes of a male cleric, whose main aim is to glorify the family of the sponsor by highlighting their spiritual devoutness, especially in times of trouble. Aristakēs’ representation of female figures in the colophon allows us to catch a glimpse of women’s lived reality and identify the expectations put on the shoulders of women by the society with patriarchal values.

¹³ Ibid., p. 317: ելեալ ի խնդիր այսմ լուսաւոր մարգարտի, որ ոչ ինչ յեղիոցս փոխանակի ընդ սմա. ստացաւ զսա նիւթականաւքս, զանանց մեծութիւնս ստացեալ, եւ յիշատակ դստեր իւրոյ ի տեղի նորա կացուցեալ, իբրեւ այն թէ զնա կենդանի տեսանելով, յորժամ զսա տեսանիցեն եւ ընթռնուցուն.

¹⁴ Ibid.: որպէս ասէ Պաւղոս – փողն Տարսոնական – անաւթն ընտրութեան, քարոզն տիեզերաց, յուսուցանելն իւրում, եթէ Կանայք հնազանդ լերուք արանց ձերոց յամենայնի իբրեւ Տեառն. եւ Արք սիրեցէք զկանայս ձեր իբրեւ զանձինս ձեր: Իսկ ամենագով երանելիքս ըստ առաքելական խրատու եւ ըստ Քրիստոսի պատուիրանացն, սուրբ եւ պարկեշտ ամուսնութեամբ կացեալ առ միմեանս որպէս զմի մարմին.

GOSPEL (1320/21 CE), YEREVAN, MATENADARAN, 7651¹⁵

The Matenadaran Gospel number 7651 contains two colophons: the principal one was written after the completion of the manuscript by its first owner Step'annos Sebastac'i in 1320/21, and the additional one after the manuscript was purchased by a certain Paronšah in 1387/88. The latter colophon, albeit short, contains details about marriage practices in medieval Armenia.

The additional colophons usually do not include the doxology part and primarily focus on the changes of circumstances related to manuscript's ownership, location, condition, and so on. This colophon informs us about the change of its owner and we find out that Paronšah purchased this manuscript with the substantial financial contribution of his wife, Ĵahan-Melik':

May you remember the last purchasers of this: Baron Paronšah, alongside his parents and all blood relatives. May you also remember my wife Ĵahan-Melik', along with her parents, who longed for this priceless pearl, this desirable manuscript, which is royal, the one that Ĵahan-Melik', daughter of lord Grigor, asked for || and received it for her *fairly earned assets*,¹⁶ as she gave her *nšan*, 3000 *spitak*, and her *erestes*, 3000 *spitak*, and bought this in accordance with the command of the Saviour, who likened the kingdom of heaven with "a merchant in search of fine pearls; on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it" [Matt 13:45–46]. Thus, longing for this pearl, she sold everything she had and bought this priceless pearl as a memorial for herself and her parents.

Now, may those who come across this holy Gospel through reading or copying it remember the recipient of this, Ĵahan-Melik', her father, lord Grigor, and her mother, Xut'lu-Melik', as well as all her blood relatives, both living and deceased. May you also be remembered by Christ our Lord.

The last colophon was written in the year 836 [= 1387/88 CE].¹⁷

¹⁵ Xaç'ikyan, *ŽD dari*, no. 715, p. 571.

¹⁶ *fairly earned assets* (with prepositions *with, through, from*) = ի հալյալ արդեանց, sometimes also ի հալյալ եւ արդար վաստակոց. A standard expression that appears in manuscripts and inscriptions.

¹⁷ Xaç'ikyan, *ŽD dari*, p. 571: Չվերջին ստացողք սորին՝ գՊարոնշահ պարոնն, հանդերձ ծնաւորիք եւ ամենայն արեան մերձակայիք, յիշեցիք: Յիշեցիք եւ զհարսն իմ՝ զՃահան-Մելիքն, հանդերձ ծնաւորիք, որ ցանկացաւ սայ անգին մարգարտիս եւ ցանկալի մատենիս, որ է թագաւորական, որ ցանկացաւ սմայ Ջահան-Մելիքն՝ դուստր տէր Գրիգորին, || եւ ստացաւ զսայ ի հալյալ արդեանց իւրոց, որ երես զիւր նշանն՝ ԳՌ. (3000) սպ[իտակ], եւ զերեստեսէն՝ ԳՌ. (3000) սպ[իտակ], եւ էառ զսա որպէս հրամայեաց փրկիչն, թէ նմանեցաւ արքայութիւնն երկնից առն վաճառականի, որ խնդրեաց մարգարիտս գեղեցիկս, եւ զտեալ մի պատուական մարգարիտ, երթեալ վաճառեաց զամենայն զոր ինչ ունէր եւ զնեաց զայն մարգարիտ: || Արդ, ցանկանալով սայ այս մարգարտիս, զամենայն զոր ինչ ունէր վաճառեաց եւ ստացաւ զայս անգին մարգարիտս յիշատակ իւր եւ ծնողաց իւրոց:

As with Melek'set', the author of the colophon, who seems to be Paronšah himself, makes an allusion to Matthew 13:45 and the pearl. Calling the manuscript "royal" is not an exaggeration, as the original colophon mentions that the manuscript came from the royal scriptorium of Cilician Armenian Kingdom.

What follows is a testimony to some practices involving women observed in Medieval Armenia. Even though Paronšah is mentioned first as the purchaser of the manuscript, it is obvious that his wife Ĵahan-Melik' contributed the money. Paronšah mentions that the money came from Ĵahan-Melik's "fairly earned assets", namely her *nšan* and her *erestes*. The word *nšan* refers to the money that Ĵahan-Melik' received during her engagement as a betrothal gift, while the *erestes* was a ceremony when the groom and his family would pay money to remove the bridal veil in order to see the bride's face for the first time.¹⁸ It becomes evident that all the money (and, apparently, all the gifts) given to the bride before and during the wedding were considered her personal assets and she could spend them as she wished.

The title of Paronšah 'Baron' was a loanword from French used to denote a nobleman, a landlord, or an important person.¹⁹ Ĵahan-Melik's father, Grigor, is presented as a *tēr*, Lord, which also shows a relatively high status in society. Thus, we can safely assume that the practices to which the colophon refers were observed amongst the upper-class society, but it is not clear in which geographic location Paronšah and Ĵahan-Melik' lived and how typical these practices were across Armenian communities.

ČAŠOC' [MISSAL] (1412/13 CE), YEREVAN, MATENADARAN, 7448²⁰

One of the colophons of the Čašoc' [Missal] (1412/13 CE), Yerevan, Matenadaran MS 7448, on folio 505v, might have been written by the hand of a woman whose name was Garianē. The language of the colophon contains several forms of spoken language and is stylistically different from that of the main colophon of the scribe. It is written in the first person and shows a very good level of literacy.

Alongside the words spelt in a way they were pronounced (յանդքնեցի, կրական) rather than following the more widely used spelling (յանդգնեցի, գրական), we find perfectly sound sentences in Classical Armenian. This indicates

Արդ, որք հանդիպիք այսմ սուրբ աւետարանիս կարդալով կամ աւրինակելով, յիշեսցիք զստացողք սորա՝ զՋահան-Մելիքն, եւ զհայրն իւր զտէր Գրիգորն, եւ զմայրն իւր զԽուրթու-Մելիքն, եւ զայլ ամենայն արեան մերձակայսն՝ զկենդանիս եւ զհանգուցեալսն, եւ դուք յիշեալ յիջիք ի Քրիստոսէ աստուծոյ մերոյ, ամէն:

Գրեցաւ վերջին յիշատակարանս ի թվ. ԳԼԶ.

¹⁸ This latter custom bears striking resemblance to a marriage practice observed in some Armenian communities in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. See, for example, Nahapetyan, "AĴjnik'ahayeri," p. 78.

¹⁹ See Łazaryan and Avetisyan, *Mijin Hayereni BaĴaran*, p. 648.

²⁰ Xač'ikyan, *ŽE dari*, I, no. 145, p. 140 and n.*.

that if Garianē was indeed the author of the colophon, then she had received some education and was, to a certain degree, familiar with the conventions of the genre, even though the details about her identity preserved in the two colophons reveal no association with the clerical class. The scribal colophon asks readers to pray for

Garianē and her husband Smēon, who departed to Christ, as well as their parents: her father Šahrkan, her mother, and her children, Hayoc' and Ustianē, her son Melik'ē, as well as her son Yohanis, who departed to God, and her nephew [sister's son] the *mtesī* Sargis, together with all their blood relatives.²¹

These details about Garianē and her family do not allow us to identify the social class to which she belongs; only her nephew's title *mtesī*, which was used in relation to anyone who had been on pilgrimage to the Holy Land, shows strong religious devotion of that member of the extended family. Scribes usually mentioned people's titles, especially if they were honorary or showed the person's status in the community. The absence of titles allows us to assume that Garianē had a relatively humble background, which makes her being literate a very compelling fact that might indicate women's access to education.

In her colophon Garianē informs the readers that she purchased and donated the manuscript to the church of the Holy Mother of God in the village of Haytar (in Erzurum province) as a memorial to her husband and her beloved ones. She puts a strongly worded curse on anyone, even her children and relatives, if they dare remove it from the church or damage it: "And if any of my children or relatives dare to meddle with this book, whether through sale or pawning or cutting a page, may Christ God cut them from within, and put that part next to the unbelievers."²² Armenian colophons contain different types of curses, which the scribes often recycle, but this one is rather unusual and could have been in use in everyday situations.

Garianē also gives instructions to the clergy who were to handle the manuscript:

And may the priests or deacons or servants of the church who will come across this book take care of it by not keeping it uncovered and by not putting it uncovered on a stone. May they be blessed by Christ. And may the priest Yovannēs be the guardian and the person in charge of the book.²³

²¹ Ibid., n. *: [...] Գարիանէ, եւ Սիմէոն՝ զայր իւր՝ զփոխեալն առ Քրիստոս եւ ծնողաց իւրոց՝ հաւրն իւրոյ Շահրկան, մաւրն իւրոյ, եւ զաւակաց իւրոց՝ Հայոցին եւ Ուստիանէ, եւ որդոյ իւրոյ Մելիքէ, եւ ի յաստուած փոխեցեալ որդոյ իւրոյ Յոհանիսիսն, եւ քւերորդոյ իւրոյ՝ Սարգիս մղտեսուն, եւ զամենայն արեան ազգայինսն իւր.

²² Ibid., p. 140: Եւ եթէ ոք յանդքնեցի՝ ի զաւակաց իմոց կամ յազգականաց ձեռնամուխ լինել ի գիրքս՝ ծախելով, կամ կրական դնելով, կամ թուղթ կտրելով, եւ Քրիստոս աստուած կտրեցէ զինքն ընդ մէջ, եւ զմասն նորա ընդ անհաւատսն դիցէ.

²³ Ibid.: եւ որք հանդիպիք ի քահանայիցն, կամ ի սարկաւազացն, կամ ի սպասաւորաց եկեղեցւոյ խնամս տանի գրոցս, մերկ ոչ պահէ, կամ մերկ ի վերայ քարի ոչ դիցէ, արինեալ

The tone of the colophon is authoritative pointing at an influential woman who had the means to buy the Missal and to donate it to the church.

GOSPEL (1465/66 CE); ĒJMIACIN, 22²⁴

The Ējmiacin Gospel MS 22 was sponsored by Xalim-Xat'un in memory of her deceased sons and husband, whom she lost one by one within an unspecified period of time. The colophon was written in 1465/66 in Arčēš (today's Erceṣ) on the northern shores of Lake Van by Yovanēs Mangasarenc', who provides us with some details about Xalim-Xat'un's life.

Xalim-Xat'un is described as a “pitiable” and “embittered” woman,²⁵ as she had lost her children and her husband. One of her sons, Yōhanēs, is referred to as *xoḡa*, a title used in Armenian for merchants. From the description of how Xalim-Xat'un's children were killed we can assume that they were all doing some type of business and for that reason travelled to large metropolises of the time such as Soltanieh and Isfahan.

This colophon attests to a family with many children, but unlike Melek'set's family in the Sasun Gospel they did not die of natural causes but were murdered at a young age by the bandits. The tragic loss of Xalim-Xat'un's children and her husband is presented in the following way:

she purchased this opulent treasure, this divinely worded holy Gospel, in memory of herself and her child, the handsome and graceful young man Karapet, who departed joyfully to the city of Sult'ania and on his way back home he was delivered into the hands of bloodthirsty ruthless *tačiks* [i.e. Muslims], who martyred him for no reason with the sword and dagger. [...] Likewise, his brother, *xoḡa* Yōhanēs, was murdered by the sword also at a young age in Isfahan at the hands of unrighteous bandits.

[...]

As well as her other young son, Ēzdanbaxšin, who also at a young age travelled to the East on business, and they returned with joy, and upon reaching Tabriz he suffered the pain of death and departed to God.

եղիցի <լիցի> ի Քրիստոս: Բայց խնամարկու եւ վերակացու գրոցս՝ Յովաննէս քահանայ եղիցի:

²⁴ Xač'ikyan, *ŽE dari*, II, no. 287, pp. 235–236.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 235: ողորմելի եւ դառնացեալ կին Խալիմ-Խաթունն; ողորմելի կին Խալիմ-Խաթունն; դառնացեալ կնոջն Խալիմին.

And their pitiable father Grigor, with broken heart and bitter life, went to Isfahan for his son Yōhanēs, and on his way back with heavy sighs, disconsolately passed away in Sōlt'ania.²⁶

Thus, we learn about the history of an Armenian family that lived under Muslim rule in an area which at the time was divided amongst a variety of Turkic and Kurdish chieftains. Xalim-Xat'un does not accompany her husband to retrieve the bodies of their children which is understandable considering how volatile the region was. Instead, we are told how she copes with the loss of her beloved ones:

This pitiable woman, Xalim-Xat'un, having witnessed this indescribable anguish, having spent days in tears, and not having lost the light from God, purchased this holy Gospel of the Lord in memory of herself and her parents Step'anos and Nazmēlēk', as well as of her husband Martiros, and Grigor, and her living son Yōhanēs, and her brother Gorg, and daughter Gulp'aš, and all her blood relatives.²⁷

We can see that the sponsorship of the manuscript serves as a means to overcome grief and to do a pious deed which may be beneficial both for the sponsor and her beloved ones in terms of spiritual salvation. In order to be “eligible” for salvation Xalim-Xat'un must have paid for the manuscript herself.

MARIAM, THE FIRST KNOWN ARMENIAN WOMAN SCRIBE AND ILLUMINATOR (?) OF MANUSCRIPTS (15TH CENTURY)

The colophon to the *Book of Sermons* [*K'arozgirk'*] by Grigor Tat'ewac'i copied in Ĵulay in Nakhichevan province has preserved the memory of an Armenian woman scribe and, perhaps, illuminator whose name was Mariam. We find several other

²⁶ Ibid.: եւ ստացաւ զվարթամ հարստութիւնս՝ զաստուածաբան սուրբ Աւետարանս յիշատակ իւրն եւ բարի զաւակին իւրոյ՝ զեղեցիկ եւ քաղցրատես երիտասարդին Կարապետին, որ զնաց ուրախութեամբ ի քաղաքն Սուլթանիա, եւ ի դառնալն ի տուն մատնեցաւ ի ձեռս արեանարբու ջալատ տանկաց, որ անմեղ նահատակեցին սրով եւ խանջալով: [...] Նույնպէս եղբայր նորին՝ խոջայ Յօհանէսն երիտասարդ հասակաւ, եւ նա յԲսպահան սրով սպանաւ ի ձեռաց անարբէն հարամկաց: [...] Այլ եւ միւս փոքրիկ որդոյն՝ Էզդանբախշին, որ եւ նա տղայ հասակաւ զնաց ի վանառ յԱրեւելս, եւ դարձան ուրախութեամբ, եւ ի հասանելն ի Թավրէզ՝ ցաւ մահու դիպաւ եւ յաստուած փոխեցաւ:

Եւ ողորմելի հայր սոցա Գրիգորն, խոց սրտով եւ դառն կենալք, զնաց տարադէմ յԲսպահան վասն որդոյն Յօհանիսին, եւ ի դառնալն հեծեժանօք կսկծու մահ եղեւ ի Սօլթանիա:

²⁷ Ibid.: Այս ողորմելի կին Խալիմ-Խաթունս զայս ամենայն անասելի կսկիծս տեսեալ եւ լալով զաւուրքն անցուցեալ եւ զոյսն յաստուծոյ ոչ հատեալ, ստացաւ զտէրունեան սուրբ Աւետարանս յիշատակ իւրն, եւ ծնողացն՝ Ստեփանոսին եւ Նազմէլէքին, եւ առն իւրում՝ Մարտիրոսին եւ Գրիգորին, եւ կենդանի որդոյն՝ Յօհանիսին, եւ եղբօրն՝ պարոն Գորգին, եւ դստերն Գուլպաշին, եւ ամենայն արեան մերձաւորաց նորին:

women scribes and illuminators of manuscripts in later centuries, but Mariam so far appears to be the first one about whom evidence has survived.²⁸

The main colophon of the manuscript and several other pages, most likely illuminated ones, were ripped off and now only half of the 977-page manuscript has survived.²⁹ Fortunately, Mariam left several other brief commemorative notes in different parts of the manuscript, which shed some light on its provenance and on the person who copied it. A short commemorative note on page 723 contains only the ‘remember’ part:

Remember, Christ God, the useless scribe Mariam the penitent, as well as my parents both spiritual and biological, and all my benefactors. And may you also be remembered in Christ our God, and His is the glory, for ever, amen.³⁰

The reference to spiritual parents implies Mariam’s association with a church or a monastic establishment. As women’s monastic centres were virtually non-existent in Armenia especially in the region where Mariam lived and worked, we may assume that she refers to a male monastic establishment. What was her relationship with the clergy, how old she was when she worked on the manuscript and many other similar questions remain unanswered, as they might have been included in the lost main colophon.

Mariam refers to herself as “Me, who is guilty of multiple sins, called Mariam but only in name and not in substance”, “a lost soul Mariam, covered in sins, the lover of the Word”, “the scribe, the useless Mariam”, and “the useless scribe Mariam the penitent”.³¹ These characterisations are quite common in colophons, and they confirm Mariam being the copier of the text. Yeremyan used the last characterisation to claim that Mariam was also the illuminator of the manuscript, for she used the word *gcoł* (գծողու Մարիամ),³² which, however, is a conjecture, as the word literally means “someone who draws lines”. However, in scholarly literature the word *gcoł* is commonly understood to refer to a scribe and not illuminator. In the absence of any other evidence, it is impossible to give a definitive answer to whether Mariam indeed illuminated the manuscript herself, or, as was more com-

²⁸ For the text of the colophon and other details about the manuscript, see *ibid.*, no. 89, p. 64 and Yeremyan, “Tashingerord dari”, pp. 48–50.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 48. Yeremyan uses the word ‘page’ and not ‘folio’ when referring to the manuscript and as I have had no access to the manuscript to verify the exact location of notes discussed here, I will keep Yeremyan’s paging.

³⁰ Xaç’ikyan, *ՉԷ dari*, II, p. 64: Յիշեալ Քրիստոս աստուած զանպիտան գծողու Մարիամ սպաշխարողս, եւ ծնողս իմ զ[h]ոգելոր եւ զմարմնաւորսն, եւ զամենայն երախտաւորսն իմ. եւ դուք յիշեալ յիշիք ի Քրիստոսէ աստուծոյ մերոյ, եւ նմա փառք յաւիտեանս, ամէն:

³¹ *Ibid.*: Չբազմամեղս յամենայնի զՄարիամ անուն, որ միայն զանունս [ուն]իմ եւ ոչ գիր [...]; մեղօք մածեալ եւ մոլորեալ ոգի Մարիամ սիրող բանի; զանպիտան Մարիամ գրիչս; զանպիտան գծողու Մարիամ սպաշխարողս.

³² Yeremyan, “Tashingerord dari”, p. 50.

mon, it was done by someone else. Whichever the reality, by looking at some text excerpts and copies of illuminations reproduced by Yeremyan,³³ it is easy to assert that Mariam was a well-educated scribe and whoever did the illuminations was a talented illuminator.

CONCLUSION

These sample colophons, albeit different in content, size, place and time of production, demonstrate how valuable colophons can be as primary sources for the study of women's history and gender relations in medieval Armenia and Armenian communities in different parts of the world. The colophon of the Gospel of Sasun, a eulogy to Queen Melek'set' and her daughter Kata, sheds light on the traditional roles of medieval noble women in Armenian society and which offers an interesting insight into the values held in this society. The discussed colophons also testify to women having the means to sponsor expensive manuscripts and thus being able to participate in the acts of commemoration and fulfilling an important social and religious duty of interceding for the dead. That is vividly demonstrated, for instance, in the Gospel manuscript acquired with Ĵahan-Melik's personal assets which she received before her marriage from her future husband's family.

The tragic loss of one's children is another common motive that we saw in these examples.

Finally, the colophon of the *Book of Sermons* [*K'arozgirk'*] by Grigor Tat'ewac'i allowed us to identify a female scribe and, perhaps, an illuminator, and preserve her memory for the future generations.

Through the examination of these colophons I hoped to emphasise their value as primary sources for the study of women's history and gender relations in medieval Armenia but also to show various limitations of this literary genre. The formulaic language and the brevity of the colophons, the different geographic locations where they were written, the circumstances under which they were written, and many other factors do not allow us to write a complete history of women by using these valuable primary sources. Instead, each colophon should be treated as a unique testimony and studied as such in the first place. Only when we examine all the colophons from this perspective, will we be able to identify common patterns and motives and better understand women's lives in medieval Armenia.

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MARQUS OF ALEPPO, A SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY FORGOTTEN SCRIBE: A BIOGRAPHY RECONSTRUCTED FROM THE COLOPHONS

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In his list of the seventeenth-century scribes, Joseph Nasrallah forgets the name of a prolific scribe: Marqus *al-kātib*.¹ This *laqab* (title) reveals his profession as a scribe; he copied manuscripts for at least forty years between 1647 and 1707, from which at least thirty-two manuscripts survived. It is possible that Marqus was the secretary of the patriarch, as was the case with his predecessor, Thalḡah *al-kātib* brother of the patriarch Euthymius Karmah.²

I will try in this article, through the colophons, to outline the biography of this tireless scribe. I will also provide an edition and translation of his colophons.

Marqus was born in Kafr Buhum in the region of Hama (Syria). His father's name was Dūḡān (mss. no 1&2 below), or Saqr (n° 11), which is the synonym of Dūḡān, the eagle. In my estimation, Marqus was born round 1630 A.D. He, therefore, could be considered as the most eminent of the second generation of scribes of the *renouveau* era that started with the Metropolitan of Aleppo, Meletius Karmah. This future patriarch, known as Euthymius Karmah, collected a good number of manuscripts containing Byzantine texts in Arabic translation and corrected them. He also translated other texts from Greek. His brother Talḡa, along

¹ Nasrallah, *HMLĒM* IV.1, pp. 300–309. Nasrallah does know of a scribe named Zaḡariyyā son of Marqus.

² Ibrahim, “Talḡat an-nāsiḡ fils du prêtre Ḥūrān al-ḡamawī”, *Chronos* 39 (2019), pp. 125–171. There are also four other manuscripts identified recently: Aleppo, Greek-catholic Archbishopric 189 (1612); Greek-catholic Archbishopric Ar. 3/1 (1632/3); Athos, Vatopedi 1049 (1637/8); Qatar, National Library, Heritage Collection 2212 (no date).

with other disciples, belonged to what I call the first generation of scribes, and contributed to spreading his works.

In the beginning, Marqus had ‘remarkably’ terrible handwriting. In 1647, he must have spent long hours of scribing under the supervision of his tutor Anthony the monk, disciple of Meletius Karmah (n° 1).³ At this time, Macarius ibn al-Za‘īm was metropolitan of Aleppo (1635–1647), then patriarch of Antioch (1647–1672). At some unknown date, certainly before 1652, he moved to Aleppo where he transcribed the manuscript *Bibliothèque orientale* 1359 (n° 2). In 1653, he wrote the last conserved manuscript as layman (n° 3). Six years later, he was already deacon (n° 4), then two years later, in 1661, he became a priest (n° 9). Therefore, the ceremony of priesthood must have taken place between August 1660 (n° 8, last as deacon) and April 1661 (n° 9, first as priest).

Talğa acquired the function of *al-kātib* – scribe and secretary – in 1623 and signed almost every manuscript until 1631.⁴ This date could be extended to 1634 if Borgia Ar. 178, not accessible to me, is signed Talğa *al-kātib*. If so, Talğa remained in his function until his brother became Orthodox patriarch of Antioch or when the latter died one year later in 1635. The immediate successor of Talğa is unknown. However, starting 1661, Marqus signed *al-kātib*.

Marqus was a married priest. He had a son called Zaḥariyyā. I could not find any information about his marriage or who his wife was. Nevertheless, I have been able to track down some information about his son who, like his father, was a calligrapher. Eleven of his manuscripts are conserved (n° 35–36). It seems that Marqus himself was the tutor of his son along with other disciples like Tūmā ibn Sulaymān (n° 37–39). The location of his workshop may have been the School of the Rūm in Aleppo, between 1664 and 1666 (n° 11).

As a scribe, Marqus was famous among the Aleppians. He copied manuscripts for people from different confessions: Yūsuf son of the Archdeacon Georges, Maronite (n° 15 (?))⁵, 17); John ibn Zinda, Maronite (n° 22, 24–26); Ibrahim Abd al-Masih, Chaldean (n° 30).

³ Five years earlier, Anthony the monk was the tutor of Miḥāyil ibn ‘Assāf ibn Srūr from Kfurbuhum as well. Miḥāyil writes colophons in a similar manner as his colleague Marqus. This Anthony could be the father of Yūsuf al-Musawwir; Yūsuf signs ms Balamand, Monastery of Our Lady 36 (1936) as follows: Yūsuf son of Anthony disciple of Euthymius (name of Meletius Karmah as patriarch). I am not sure whether he refers to himself or to his father as disciple of the famous patriarch. If he refers to his father, another question should be investigated: when did his father become monk and under which circumstances?

⁴ Ibrahim, “Talġat an-nāsiḥiḥ fiḥ du prêtre Ḥūrān al-ḥamawī”, no 19, 20, 23, 24, 27. The manuscripts no 21, 22, 26, 28 were not accessible to verify.

⁵ The name is deleted.

DATES AND CONCORDANCES

Manuscript number	Christian era	Islamic era	Adam
1			Thursday February 11, 7155
2			Tuesday July 14, 7160
3	October 5, [1653]	[Dhulqaada 23,] 1063	October 5, 7162
	[1680/1 or 1682/3]	1091	7191
4	[1658/9]		7167
5	[1658/9]		7167
6	March 7, [1659]		Wednesday, first week of Lent March 7, 7167
7	[1658/9]		7167
8	August 4, [1660]		Saturday August 4, 7168
9	1089 (?) ⁶	1101 (?)	7169
	[1660/1]		7169
10	April 18, [1661]		April 18, 7169
11	June 15, [1664/5]	[Dhulhijja] 1074 [1664]	Wednesday June 15, 7173 [1665]
	August 8, [1664/5]	beginning of the year 1075 [1664]	Monday August 8, 7173
	October 18, [1664/5]	1074	October 18, 7174
	June 16, 1674?	1075	Friday June 16, 7174
12	[Sept 1665 to June 24, 1666]	1076	7174
13	July 19, [1667]		July 19, 7177 [7175]
	August 22, [1667]		August 22, 7175
	September 11, [1667]		September 11, 7175 [7176]
14	[March 19, 1668]	[Chawal 15,] 1078	Wednesday half of the Fast March 19, 7176
15	[April 17, 1669]	[Dhulkaada 26,] 1079	Monday of the Holy Week April 17, 7177
16	[May 11 to August 31, 1670]	1081	7178
19	[August 18, 1674]	[Jumada I 26, 1085]	August 18, 7182

⁶ The date 1101 A.H. is equivalent to 1689/90 A.D. and 7198 from the creation.

22	Tuesday June 20, 1683		
23	[July 29, 1684]	[Shaaban 26,] 1095	July 29, 7192
24	[September 1 to October 28] 1684	1095	7193
25	[September 1,] 1686	[Shawwal 22,] 1097	September 1, 7194
26	[December 7, 1686]	[Safar 1,] 1098	December 7, 7195
28	[October 5, 1689]	1100	October 5, 719<8>
29	August 13, [1691]	Dhulhijja 15, 1102	Friday August 13, 7199
30	September 27, 1693		
31	[October 16, 1700]	[Jumada I 14,] 1112	October 16 7208
32	[1705 or 1706]	1117	Thursday August 17, 7214

MANUSCRIPTS COPIED BY MARQUS

As a Layman

1- Paris, BnF Ar. 293 (February 1647)⁷

Content: Chronicle of Eutychius

Title, f. 3^f

كتاب التاريخ المجموع على التحقيق والتصديق تأليف البطريك افتيشيوس المكنى بسعيد ابن بطريق كتبه الى اخيه عيسى في معرفة التواريخ الكليه من عهد ادم الى سني الهجره الاسلاميه

Colophon, f. 272v

وكان الفراغ من نسخة هذا التاريخ المبارك المقدس نهار الخميس حادي عشر من شهر اشباط المبارك سنه سبعة الاف ومايه وخمسه وخمسين لايونا ادم عليه السلام وكلهن اتطلع في هذا التاريخ المبارك ولقا فيه نقص او غلط وصلحه يصلح الله حاله ويدعي لكتابه بغفران الخطايا والمائثم والكلام صفة المتكلم والكاتب متعلم ولا تعتب عليه الذي لم يستحق ان يذكر اسمه لاجل كثرة خطاياه وفور ائمه المسكين الحقير اصغرا اولاد الكنيسه مرقص ابن دوغان ابن غنام تلميذ انطونيوس الراهب تلميذ المرحوم البطرك كرمه الحموي رحمة الله عليه والكاتب من دار العزتك من قرية كفرهم من معاملة حماه فما لا احدا سلطان من الله ان يغيره عن صاحبه المذكور بوجه من الوجوه ولا حيله من الحيل وكلهن

⁷ Troupeau, *Catalogue des manuscrits arabes, 1. Manuscrits chrétiens*, I, p. 261. Manuscript consulted online on the website of the BnF:

<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b110042431>

خالف ذلك يكون حظه مع يوطس الاسخريوطي الذي باع سيده ويكون شريك اريوس الذي افضل الابن من الابن
والويل ثم الويل لمن رضي لنفسه ذلك والسبح لله دائما

End of the copy of this blessed *History* on Thursday 11 of February 7155 after Adam; who ever reads this *History* and finds any missing or error, may he correct it, God corrects his situation. May he also ask [the Lord] to forgive the sins of the scribe, the speech describes the speaker. The scribe is a learner, don't blame him, who is unworthy to mention his name for the number of his sins, the poor, humble and less of the children of the Church, Marqus son of Dūgān, son of Gannām, disciple of Anthony the monk, disciple of the deceased patriarch Karmah from Hama. May God forgive him. The scribe is from Dār-al-Azmk, in the Chora of Kafr Buhum in the vicinity of Hama...

2- Beirut, Bibliothèque orientale 1359 (1652)⁸

Content: Book of the Prophecies

Title, f. 2v:

كُتِبَ نبوات الانبياء المطهّره المعظّمه الذي تقال في الصوم المقدس وفي الاعياد على دور السنه

Colophon, f. 55v

فرغ من اول الصوم الى نهار خميس الكبير وبالله العون والنصر والتدبير بيد افقر عباد الله تعالى مرقص بن دوغان ابن
الحاج غنام من قرينه كفر بهام من معامله حماه الحميه فلنطلب من كل من وجد في هذا القراه غلط واصلحه يصلح
السيد المسيح احواله بشفاعه السيده...

End of [this part from] the beginning of the Lent to the Great Thursday ... by the poorest servant of God, Marqus, son of Dūgān, son of the ḥāḡḡ Gannām, from the chora of Kafr Buhum in the vicinity of Hama the protected...

Colophon, f. 76r

كملت قراه صيام الكبير على التمام والكمال نهار الثلثا المبارك رابع عشر شهر تموز المبارك سنه سبع الف مائه وستين
لكون العالم وذلك بمدينه حلب ونطلب من الله تعالى ان يسامح كاتبه اقل عباد الله تعالى مرقص بن دوغان من قرية
كفر بهام من معامله حماه المحروسه...

End of the whole Readings of the Great Lent, on the blessed Tuesday 14 July 7160 of the creation of the world, in the city of Aleppo. We ask God to forgive the scribe the less of the servants of God, Marqus, son of Dūgān, from the chora of Kafr Buhum in the vicinity of Hama the protected...

⁸ Manuscript accessed at the Library and online on vhmml:
<https://w3id.org/vhmml/readingRoom/view/129359>.

Colophon, f. 112r

تمت ساعات الغطاس على يد افقر عباد الله تعالى مرقص بن دوغان سنه سبعة الاف ومايه وستين لادم

End of the Hours of the Baptism on the hand of the poorest servant of God, Marqus son of Dūgān, the year 7160 after Adam.

Colophon, f. 120r

ثم شهر كانون الثاني ويتلوه شهر شباط على يد افقر عباد الله تعالى مرقص الكفرهاوي سنه سبع الاف ومايه وستين لادم

End of the month of January followed by February, by the hand of the poorest servant of God Marqus from Kafr Buhum in the year 7160 after Adam.

3- Aleppo, Greek-orthodox Archbishopric 37 (October 1653)⁹

Content : Triodion

Colophon

كل بعون الله تعالى في الخامس من شهر تشرين الاول ٧١٦٢ لادم ١٠٦٣ للهجرة على يد افقر عباد الله تعالى الذي لم يستحق ان يذكر اسمه مرقص بن دوغان <الكفرهاوي> اصلا الارثوذكسي مذهبا ويسال كل من قرا في هذا التريودي فليترحم على الكاتب المسكين

Completed with the help of Almighty God on the 5th of October 7162 after Adam, 1063 A.H., by the hand of the poorest servant of god, Marqus from Kafr Buhum in birth, orthodox in religion...

Note by the scribe thirty years later:

نظر فيه الفقير المسكين كاتبه المذكور اسمه اعلاه في ٧١٩١ لادم الموافق ١٠٩١ للهجرة (١٦٨٣ م)

Has looked at it, its humble scribe which name is mentioned above, in 7191 after Adam, equivalent to 1091 A.H.

As a Deacon

4- Latakia, Greek-orthodox Archbishopric 45 (1658/9)¹⁰

Content : Synaxarion for the months September-February

⁹ *al-Maḥṭūṭāt al-'arabiyya fī maktabat muṭrāniyat Ḥalab li ar-Rūm al-'urtūduks*, Lebanon, 1989, pp. 19–20.

¹⁰ Accessed on the digital copy conserved at the Center of Saint Joseph of Damascus-Balamand.

Title, f. 1r :

كُتِبَ السنكسار يتضمن اخبار الرسل والانبياء وقصص النساك والزهاد والعباد الابرار واطراف ما جرى على الشهدا والشهيدات وكافة المجاهدين والمعترفين بالمسيح في ساير الاقطار يقري كل يوم على مدار السنه في كنايس الارثوذكسيين من اول شهر ايلول الى اخر شهر اب ومن احد الفريسي والعشار الى يوم اثنين العنصره الذي يليه صوم الرسل الاطهار

Colophon

تم نصف سنكسار على يد افقر عباد الله تعالى مرقص باسم شماس قرية كفر بهام سنة ٧١٦٧

Completed [the first] half of the Synaxarion by the hand of the poorest servant of God Marqus, a deacon in name, [from] the Chora of Kafr Buhum, year 7167.

5- Latakia, Greek-orthodox Archbishopric 18 (1658/9)¹¹

Content : Synaxarion for the months March-August

Colophon

تم السنكسار جميعه بعون الله تعالى وتاييده في سنة سبعة الاف ومايه سبعة وستين لادم على يد افقر عباد الله الذي لم يستحق ان يذكر اسمه من كثرة خطاياها ووفور ائمه مرقص باسم شماس من قرية كفر بهام ساكن يومئذ مدينة حلب ويسأل كل من قرا هذا الكتاب المقدس ووجد فيه نقص ...

Completed the whole Synaxarion with the help of Almighty God in the year 7167 after Adam, by the hand of the poorest servant of God Marqus deacon in name from the Chora of Kafr Buhum, resident in the city of Aleppo [...]

6- Aleppo, Greek-orthodox Archbishopric 48 (March 1659)¹²

Content : Synaxarion of the Triodion and the Pentecostarion

According to the catalogue, colophon:

مرقص باسم شماس من قرية كفر بهام في معاملة حماه في ٧ اذار يوم الأربعاء اجمعه الأولى من الصوم ٧١٦٧ لادم

Marqus, a deacon in name, from the Chora of Kafr Buhum, from the vicinity of Hama, on the 7th of March, Wednesday of the first week of Lent, 7167 after Adam.

¹¹ *al-Maḥtūṭāt al-'arabiyya fī abrašiyāt Ḥoms wa Ḥamāh wa al-Lāḍiqiyya li-Rūm al-Urtūduks*, Balamand, 1994, p. 99.

¹² *al-Maḥtūṭāt al-'arabiyya fī maktabat mutrāniyat Ḥalab li ar-Rūm al-'urtūduks*, p. 23.

7- Aleppo, Greek-orthodox Archbishopric 50 (1659)¹³

Content : Horologion

According to the catalogue, the scribe is Marqus, a deacon in name, 7167 after Adam.

The catalogue further states that this copy was dedicated to the priest Dawūd son of al-ḥāḡḡ Girgī from Amioun who was friend of the priest Marqus. Therefore, I conclude that by the time Dawūd wrote his note, Marqus was ordained priest. This should have happened after August 1660.

8- Paris, BnF Ar. 187 (August 1660)¹⁴

Content: Dialogue of George and three other *fuqahā* in the attendance of a Muslim prince

Title:

كُتِبَ مَحَاوِرَةٌ جِدَالِيَّةٌ فِي أَمْرِ الدِّينِ جَرَتْ بِالْأَرْضِ الشَّامِيَّةِ بِحَضْرَةِ الْإِمَامِ الْمُشْمَرِيِّ الْإِبْرَاهِيمِ الْكَرِيمِ جَرَجَسَ الرَّاهِبِ
بَدِيرِ الْقُدَيْسِ سَمْعَانَ الْبَحْرِيِّ وَبَيْنَ ثَلَاثَةِ أَنْفَارٍ مِنْ فُقَهَاءِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ فِي إِمَارَةِ الْمَلِكِ الظَّاهِرِ

Colophon, f. 98

وقد نجح على يد أفقر عباده مرقص باسم شماس قاطن يومئذ في مدينة حلب الأرثوذكسي مذهبا وكان فراغه نهار
السبت في الرابع من شهر اب من سنين سبع الاف مائة ثمانية وستين لادم ٧١٦٨

Completed by the hand of His poorest servant Marqus, a deacon in name, resident at that day in the city of Aleppo, orthodox in confession, finalized on Saturday 4th of August of the year 7168 after Adam.

As a priest

9- Paris, BnF Ar. 142 (April 1661)¹⁵

Homilies of John Chrysostom

¹³ *al-Maḥṭūṭāt al-'arabiyya fī maktabat muṭrāniyat Ḥalab li ar-Rūm al-'urtūduks*, p. 23.

¹⁴ Troupeau, *Catalogue des manuscrits arabes, 1. Manuscrits chrétiens*, I, p. 160. Accessed online on the website of the BNF:

<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b11004794f>

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 103–104. Accessed online on the website of the BNF:

<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b11004794f>

Title:

كتاب مواظ شريفه والفاظ مختصره لطيفه لاينا العظيم في القديسين يوحنا فم الذهب ريس اساقفة مدينة القسطنطينيه

Colophon 1, f. 115v

علقه بيده الفقير لله سبحانه الحقير الدليل الغير مستحق ان يذكر اسمه لاجل كثرة خطاياها ووفور اثمه بالاسم لا بالفعل
مرقص بزي كاهن سنة ٧١٦٩ لادم ١٠٨٩ (?) للتجسد ١١٠١ للهجرة

Written by the hand of the poorest [servant] of God, the humble unworthy to be mentioned for the number of his sins and iniquities, in name not in act Marqus the priest in the year 7169 after Adam, 1089 (?) of Incarnation and 1101 A.H.

Colophon 2, f. 149^r

علقه بيده القانيه الفقير اليه سبحانه الراجي من الواقف عليه ان لا يواخده بقله الادب الخوري مرقص الكاتب وذلك
في خامس شهر نيسان سنة ٧١٦٩ لادم

Written by the mortal hand of His poorest [servant] who asks its reader not to blame him for lack of education, Marqus al-kātib the priest, on April 5 of the year 7169 after Adam.

10- Humayra, Monastery Saint George 7 (April 1661)¹⁶

Content: Typicon

Title:

تبيكون الرسوم والطقس المعلوم الصاير في كنيسة اورشليم والسيق المقدس لاينا الباء؟؟ بالله البار سابا وترتيب ونظام
ليس لكائس اورشليم وحدها بل وللاماكن المقدسه كلها وكائس الله المطهره باسرها

Colophon

كل بحمد الله وعونه وتوفيقه على يد احقر عباد الله تعالى الخوري مرقص الكاتب وذلك في نهار الجمع جمعة الالام
الشريفه ثامن عشر شهر نيسان المبارك من شهر سنة ٧١٦٩ لادم

Completed with the help of God by the hand of the poorest servant of God Marqus al-kātib the priest, on Friday of the week of Holy Passions on the 18th of blessed April of the year 7169 after Adam

Marqus states that he copied this manuscript from the autograph of the translator Euthymius Karmeh.

¹⁶ Accessed on the digital copy conserved at the Center of Saint Joseph of Damascus-Balamand and online: <https://w3id.org/vhmmml/readingRoom/view/125973>

11- Dayr aš-Šuwayr, Ordre Basilien Choueirite 179 (198, 210) (1664/5)¹⁷

Content: Old Testament

Title:

كُتِبَ بِتَضَمَّنِ كُتُبِ الْعَيْقَةِ الَّتِي هِيَ عَلَى الْحَقِّ وَالصَّوَابِ وَهُوَ كِتَابٌ وَاحِدٌ وَمَجْمُوعٌ فِيهِ عِدَّةٌ سِتَّةٌ وَأَرْبَعُونَ

Colophon 1, f. 78v

كملت الخمسة اسفار المقدسه بعون الله تعالى وحسن توفيقه وذلك في نهار الاربعاء في الخامس عشر من شهر حزيران من شهر سنة سبعة الاف مئة ثلاثة وسبعين لآدم الموافق لهجرة الاسلامية الف واربعه وسبعين وذلك على يد احقر الورى الحقير الدليل الذي لم يستحق أن يذكر اسمه لأجل كثرة خطاياه ووفور اثمه مرقص برسم خوري الكاتب بلحب الأرثوذكسي مذهباً فقصدته من كل من قرى في هذه الخمسة الأسفار ووجد فيها نقص او غلط واصلحها المسيح الاله يصلح احواله دنيا واخره لان كل شي ناقص وليس الكمال الا لله الواحد له المجد

Completed are the five holy books with the help and blessing of Almighty God on Wednesday June 15 of the year 7173 after Adam, equivalent to year 1074 of the Islamic Hīgra, by the hand of the most humble and poor in human kind who is unworthy to have his name mentioned for the number of his sins and iniquities, Marqus, a priest in name, the scribe in Aleppo, orthodox in confession. He asks whoever reads these five books and find any mistake or gaffe, to correct it. Christ God may fix his conditions in this life and the next one, because everything is incomplete and no one is perfect but God.

Colophon 2, f. 175v

كامل سفر تاريخ الايام وهو المذكور في اسفار الملوك المسماه ديريامين وهو الجزء الرابع من اسفار الملوك مما ديونه (؟) عزرا السافور من بني هرون الامام الاول وكان ذلك نهار الاثنين في الثامن من شهر آب المبارك من شهر سنة سبعة الاف مئة وثلاثة وسبعين لابونا ادم عليه السلام الموافق لهجره افتتاح سنة الف وخمسه وسبعين وذلك على يد الحقير الدليل الذي لم يستحق ان يذكر اسمه لاجل كثرة خطاياه ووفور اثمه بالاسم لا بالفعل مرقص برسم خوري الارثوذكسي المذهب قاطن يوميذ محروسة حلب وقد كتب في مدرسة الروم التي برسم مكتب اولاد النصارى المسيحيين والان وصى لكل من نظر في هذه الاسطر الحقيره ووجد فيها نقص او غلط واصلحها السيد المسيح احواله دنيا واخره لان كل انسان ناقص والكمال فهو لله تعالى والان مترجى من القاري الرحمة ومن السامع امين

Completed is the Book of the Chronicles mentioned in the Books of the Kings known as Dabreiamim the fourth part of the Books of the Kings written (?) by Ezra HaSofer from the tribe of Aaron, on Monday August 8 of the year 7173 after our father Adam, peace be on him, equivalent to the beginning of the year 1075, by the hand of the humble and poor who is unworthy to have his name mentioned for the

¹⁷ Accessed on vhmml (two parts) : <https://w3id.org/vhmml/readingRoom/view/120762>; <https://w3id.org/vhmml/readingRoom/view/120774>.

number of his sins and iniquities, Marqus, a priest in name not in act, orthodox in confession, resident in the protected Aleppo at that time. He copied it in the school of the Rūms for the college of the Christians. He asks whoever reads these humble lines and find any mistake or gaffe, to correct it; the Lord Christ may fix his conditions in this life and the next one, because every man is incomplete and no one is perfect but God. I further ask the reader and hearer forgiveness.

Colophon 3, f. 254v

كملت ترجمة نبوة حزقيال النبي وفيما بعد يتلوها النبوه لحزقيال النبي... على يد احقر الورى مرقص برسم خوري ابن صقر ارثوذكسي المذهب وكان ذلك في الثامن عشر تشرين الاول من شهور سنة سبعة الاف مية اربعة وسبعين لادم اتفقا للهجرة الف اربعة وسبعين تكون الاخره الى خير امين

Completed is the translation of Ezekiel the prophet... by the hand of the humblest of the humankind Marqus, a priest in name, son of Saqr, Orthodox in confession, on October 18 of the year 7174, equivalent to 1074 A.H., may the end be good.

Colophon 4, f. 358v

كل السفر الاول من المكابيين ولربنا السبح دائما... وذلك في سنة ٧١٧٥ لادم

Completed is the first book of the Maccabees. To our Lord the praise forever... in the year 7175 after Adam

Colophon 5, f. 380r

تمت التورات الشريفة مع كافة اقوال الانبيا الاولين وجملتها ستة واربعون كتابا محورة وكان النجاز من تحريرها والفراغ من تسطيرها نهار الجمعة في سادس عشر شهر حزيران من شهور ٧١٧٤ لادم عليه السلام وأيضا مسيحية سنة ١٦٧٤ وللهجرة ١٠٧٥ احسن الله عاقبتها الى خير وذلك على يد احقر الورى الذي لم يستحق ان يذكر اسمه بالاسم لا بالفعل مرقص الكاتب باسم خوري الملكي المذهب وكان ذلك في رياسة السيد البطريك كير مكاريوس الحلبي الانطاكي جالس في الكرسي البطرسي الرسولي

Completed is the holy Torah with all the words of the prophets, in total forty-six books. This copy is completed on Friday June 16 of the year 7174 after Adam peace be on him, 1674 according to the Christian era and 1075 A.H. May God make its end good, by the hand of the most humble of the humankind, who is unworthy to mention his name, Marqus the scribe, a priest in name not in act, Melkite in confession, during the primacy of kyr Macarius of Aleppo patriarch of Antioch who is in the see of Peter the Apostle

12- Charfeh, Monastery of Our Lady 6/1 and 6/2 (August 1667)¹⁸

Content: Synaxarion in two parts from September to February and from March to August

Colophon

كُل في شهر اب سنة سبعة الاف ومية واربع وسبعين لادم على يد مرقس باسم خوري ارثوذكسي المذهب ...

Completed during the month of August of the year 7174 after Adam by the hand of Marqus, a priest in name, Orthodox in confession.

تم السنكسار جميعه بعون الله تعالى في سنة سبعة الاف ومائة واربع وسبعين لادم الموافق للهجره ١٠٧٦ على يد مرقص باسم خوري الارثوذكسي المذهب وقد كتبه على النسخة الاصلية من غير تغيير ولا زياده

Completed is the whole Synaxarion with help of Almighty God in the year 7174 after Adam, equivalent to 1076 A.H., by the hand of Marqus, a priest in name, Orthodox in confession, written on the basis of the original without modification or addition.

13- Beirut, Bibliothèque orientale 515 (March 1667)¹⁹

Content: Canon-law

Title:

[المصحف الناموسي الشريف]

Colophon 1, f. 96r

تمت جماعة انكرا بالتام والكمال وبالله المستعان وذلك على يد افقر عباد الله تعالى واقل اولاد الكنيسة الارثوذكسية بالاسم لا بالفعل مرقص باسم خوري الملكي المذهب المعتقد اعتقادا حقيقي على ما كتبت يمينه ومصدق لما سنوه هولاي الزعماء وعماد الدين وعليه نحا وعليه ثموت وبه الرجا وذلك في التاسع عشر شهر تموز المبارك من شهر سنة سبعة الاف ومائة وسبعة [اقرا خمسه] وسبعين

Completed the whole Council of Ancara with God's help, by the hand of the poorest servant of God and the less of the children of the Orthodox Church, in name not in act Marqus Melkite priest by rite who confesses rightly what his hand wrote and acknowledges what those leaders of religion legislated according to these laws we live, die and, in them, is our hope. On July 19 of the year 7177 [read: 7175]

¹⁸ I. Armalet, *Catalogue des Manuscrits de Charfet*, Jounieh, 1937, p. 365.

¹⁹ Accessed online on vhmml : <https://w3id.org/vhmml/readingRoom/view/504910>

Colophon 2, f. 190r

كملت الجامع المقدسة المباركة على ما وجد وبالله المستعان وذلك في الثاني والعشرين من شهر اب المبارك من شهر
سنة سبعة الاف ومايه وخمسه وسبعين لادم وذلك على يد افقر عباد الله تعالى واقل اولاد كنيسته الله وادنى خدامها
الذي غير مستحق ان يذكر اسمه لاجل كثرة خطاياها ووفور اثمه مرقص باسم خوري الكاتب بمجروسة حلب
الارثوذكسي المذهب وقصده من قدس كل من نظر نقص واصلح اصلح الله احواله دنيا واخره امين

Completed are the blessed holy Councils as we found them with God's help on August 22 7175, by the hand of the poorest servant of Almighty God and lesser of the Church of God's children and humblest of its servant, who is unworthy to mention his name for the number of his sins and iniquities, Marqus, a priest in name, scribe in protected Aleppo, Orthodox in confession, whoever looks into it and find any missing words and corrects it, God may fix his conditions in this life and in the other one. Amen.

Colophon 3, f. 253r

وقد علقه بيده الفانيه الفقير الذليل المسكين الذي لم يستحق ان يذكر اسمه لاجل كثرة خطاياها ووفور اثمه مرقص باسم
خوري الارثوذكسي المذهب قاطن حلب يومئذ وقاصد من قدس كل من نظر هذه الاسطر الحقيره وراى فيها نقص
يصلحه يصلح المسيح احواله دنيا واخره وكان ذلك في الحادي عشر شهر ايلول من شهر سنه ٧١٧٥ لادم عليه
السلام

Copied by the hand of the poor and humble who is unworthy to mention his name for the number of his sins and iniquities, Marqus, a priest in name, Orthodox in confession resident in Aleppo, whoever looks into these lines and finds any lack and corrects it, Christ may fix his conditions in this life and in the other one. September 11 of the year 7175 after Adam.

14- Saydnaya, Monastery of Our Lady 2 (March 1668)²⁰

Content: Lectionary

According to the catalogue, two colophons –

كل على يد مرقص خوري قاطن حلب اصله من كفرهم في ١٩ اذار يوم الاربعاء نصف الصوم المبارك سنة
٧١٧٦ لادم و١٠٧٨ للهجره

Completed by the hand of Marqus the priest resident in Aleppo, by birth from Kafr Buhum, on Wednesday half of the blessed Fast March 19 of the year 7176 after Adam, 1078 A.H.

²⁰ *Wasf lil-kutub wal-maḥṭūṭāt* [fi dayr sayyidat Ṣaydnāyā] [= Description of the Books and Manuscripts (in the Monastery of our Lady of Saydnaya)], Damascus, 1986, p. 11.

علق بيده مرقص خوري الاربعاء ليلة خميس التوبة ٢٠ اذار ٧١٧٦ لادم في رياسة البطريرك مكاريوس الانطاكي الحلبي وقد كتب بهمة الشماس نعمة المعروف بابن الجيمي الحلبي الذي هو اليوم خادم صيدنايا

Copied by the hand of Marqus the priest on Wednesday, the night of Thursday of Repentance March 20 7176 after Adam during the patriarchate of Macarius of Antioch from Aleppo, it was copied for his sponsor Naamat the deacon ibn al-Lagmi from Aleppo, servant of Saydnaya.

15- Oxford, Bodl. Uri Christ. 88 (April 1669)²¹

Content: The Spiritual Meadow; Paul of Monenbasia; Epistle of Chrysostom to Theodor

Colophon

تم وكل هذا الكتاب الشريف بيد العبد الضعيف النحيف الذي لم يستحق ان يذكر اسمه لاجل كثرة خطاياها ووفور اثمها مرقص باسم كاهن الارثوذكسي مذهبا الحلبي موطنا وقد كتبه بهمة واجتهاد الرجل الدين الخبير المحب لقراءه الكتب والمطالعة بها <حذف الاسم> وقد كتبه لنفسه ملكا له وتصريفا بيده الله يلهمه العمل بما فيه ويكون مبارك عليه. وقد حرر في اليوم السابع عشر من شهر نيسان اثنين جمعة الالام من شهر سنة سبعة الاف مائة سبعة وسبعين لادم الموافق للهجرة الف تسعة وسبعون

Finalized and completed is this blessed book by the hand of the weak and feeble servant whose name is unworthy to be mentioned for the number of his sins and iniquities Marqus in dress of priest, Orthodox in confession, resident in Aleppo. He wrote it for its commendatory who loves reading books (his name deleted), he copied (i.e., commissioned) it for himself, for his possession in his hands. May God inspire him to behave according to its words and may it be blessed for him. Copied on Monday of the Holy Week April 17 of the year 7177 after Adam, equivalent to 1079 A.H.

16- Dayr aš-Šir, Ordre basilien alépin 600 (between May 1 and August 1, 1670)²²

Content: Collection

Title:

مجموع لطيف

²¹ J. Uri, *Bibliothecae Bodleianae codicum manuscriptorum orientalium videlicet Hebraicorum, Chaldaicorum, Syriacorum, Aethiopicorum, Arabicorum, Persicorum, Turcicorum, Copticorumque Catalogus. Pars Prima. a Joanne Uri confectus*, Oxford, p. 44. Accessed at the Library.

²² Accessed online on vhmml.

Colophon, p. 633

وقد كتب بيد الفقير الذليل المسكين الخوري مرقص في تاريخ المذكور ادناه وفي تلك السنة التي مر ببلاد المصكوف وهي ثاني خطرة وهي التي توفي المرحوم الشماس بولس وقد كتب عن نسخة البطريك المذكور وهي بخط يده كان جمعها في كتب غزيرة في تلك البلاد واخرجها من الرومية الى العربية لنفع المسيحيين واولاد الله ابناء المعمودية وذلك سنة ٧١٧٨ لادم الموافق للهجرة ١٨٠١ [اقرا ١٠٨١]

Copied by the hand of the poor and humble priest Marqus at the date that is mentioned at the end, in that year, he [Macarius ibn al-Za'im?] visited Moscow for the second time when the deacon Paul died, he [Marqus] transcribed [it] from the autograph of the mentioned patriarch who had gathered it from many books in that country and translated its content from Greek into Arabic for the benefit of the Christians, children of God in baptism, in the year 7178 of Adam, equivalent to 1801 [read: 1081] A.H.

p. 796

علقه بيده الفانية الفقير الذليل المسكين حاوي الماثم والقبائح الخايب من كل عمل صالح وليس مستحق ان يذكر اسمه بالاسم لا بالفعل مرقص بزي كاهن سنة 7178 للعالم الموافق لسنتين الهجرة سنة 1081 وقد نسخ عن مجموع بخط السيد البطريك الانطاكي وقد كتب هذا بهمته ادم الله رياسته امين

Copied by the mortal hand of the poor humble man vessel of sins and ugliness, who has no good acts and is unworthy to mention his name, in name not by acts Marqus in dress of a priest, in the year 1081, he copied it from a collective manuscript transcribed by Kyr the patriarch of Antioch, according to his will, may God maintain his primate.

17- Bzummār, Our Lady Convent Ar. 51 (1671)²³

Content: Eighty-seven homilies of John Chrysostom

Title

مواظ شريفه والفاظ مختصره لطيفه

Colophon

علقه بيده الفانية الفقير اليه سبحانه مرقص باسم كاهن الحلبي موطننا الارثوذكسي مذهبا وذلك في سنة ٧١٧٩ لادم عليه السلام وقد كتبت بهمة الرجل الدين الورع محب قراءة الكتب الالهية الشماس يوسف ابن الشدياق جرجس من طائفة الموارنة الله يجعله مبارك عليه ويلهمه العمل بما فيه وكل من نظر في هذه الاسطر الحقيرة وراى فيها نقص واصلاحها يصلح الله احواله دنيا واخره وبالله التوفيق

²³ No catalogue. Accessed online on vhmml:

<https://w3id.org/vhmml/readingRoom/view/131170>

Copied by the mortal hand of the poor to Him (Who is praised) Marqus, a priest in name, resident in Aleppo, Orthodox in confession, in the year 7179 after Adam peace be on him. I wrote it according to the will of the pious man who loves reading the holy books, the deacon Yūsuf son of the Archdeacon Georges from the Maronite confession, may God make it blessed for him and inspire him to act according to its words. Whoever reads these humble lines, finds any lack, and correct it, may God fix his conditions in this life and the other one. In God is success.

18- Aleppo, Maronite Archbishopric 461 (1673)²⁴

Content: Chronicle of Eutychius

Title

كتاب التاريخ المجموع على التحقيق والتصديق تأليف البطريرك افتيشوس المكنى بسعيد بن بطريق كتبه الى اخيه عيسى في معرفة التواريخ الكليه من عهد آدم الى سني الهجرة الاسلاميه

Colophon not preserved

19- Hamatura, Monastery of Our Lady 6 (August 1674)²⁵

Content: Qundāq (Book of the priest)

Title:

خدمة الكاهن في الاغريبيات والقداسات

Colophon, f. 108v

هذا القنداق المكرم فهو برسم الرجل الدين خادم شرف الكهنوتيه المتوشح بحلة الالهيه الشيخ الخوري يوسف بن المرحوم حنا قاطن يومئذ بحروسه حلب حالا فما لاحد سلطان من الله ان يغيره عن صاحبه بوجهه من الوجوه ولا بحيله من الحيل ولا يرهنه ولا يسترهه ولا يوهبه ولا يستوهبه ولا يطمع عليه جدا كان او مزحا فن تعدا ما ذكرنا يكون محروم مفروز وحرر في الثامن عشر من شهر اب من شهر سنه ٧١٨٢ لادم عليه السلام والموافق هجره سنه ١٠٨٥ وبالله التوفيق حرره الفقير الى الله تعالى مرقص بزي كاهن

This blessed Qundāq was commissioned by the clergyman servant of the noble priesthood, bearer of the divine robe aš-šayḥ Yūsuf son of Ḥannā, resident at that time in the protected Aleppo, no one has the authority from God to take it from its owner in any way or any trick, nor mortgage it, nor pledge it, nor give or take it as gift, nor covet it as pleasantry or seriously. Let anyone who trespasses these be anathema. Copied on August 18 of the year 7182 after Adam peace be on him

²⁴ Francisco Del Río Sánchez, *Arabic manuscripts in the Maronite Library of Aleppo (Syria)*, Barcino Monographica Orientalia 9, 2017, p. 133.

²⁵ *al-Maḥṭūṭāt al-'arabiyya fī al-adyira al-urṭūduksiyya al-anṭākiyya fī Lubnān*, 1, 1991, p. 40.

equivalent to the year 1085 A.H. In God is success. Copied by the poor to God Marqus in the dress of priest.

20- British Library Ar. Christ. 22 (1675)²⁶

Content: Psalter and Horologion

Titles:

كتاب زبور داوود النبي عليه السلام وهو ماية ونحسون مزمورا وليوحنا الدمشقي عشرون كاتزما
كتاب اورولوجيون الصلوات المفروضة في السبعة اوقات اخرجه من الرومي بكده وتعب الفقير ميلاتيوس لما كان
مطران بمدينه حلب

Colophon

تم الزبور الالهى مع العشرين كاتزما بعون الله تعالى على يد احقر الورى مرقص بزي كاهن الكاتب وذلك في سنة
٧١٨٣ لادم

Completed is the holy Psalter with the twenty kathisma with the help of Almighty God by the hand of the humblest of the humankind Marqus in the dress of a priest the scribe, in the year 7183 after Adam.

21- Aleppo, Maronite Archbishopric 303 (1681)²⁷

Content: Spiritual Paradise of Gregory of Nyssa & collection of homilies

Title:

كتاب الفردوس العقلي وايضاح اشجار

Colophon not preserved.

22- Aleppo, Maronite Archbishopric 50 (1683)²⁸

Content: Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew of John Chrysostom

Title:

كتاب تفسير انجيل متى ليوحنا فم الذهب

²⁶ *Catalogus codicum manuscriptorum orientalium qui in Museo britannico asservantur. Pars secunda: Codices arabicos amplexens*, London, 1852, pp. 25–26.

²⁷ Francisco Del Río Sánchez, *Arabic manuscripts in the Maronite Library of Aleppo*, pp. 92–93.

²⁸ Francisco Del Río Sánchez, *Arabic manuscripts in the Maronite Library of Aleppo*, p. 28.

Colophon

قد كمل النجاز من هذا الكتاب الشريف المكرم الذي هو الجزء الاول من تفسير انجيل متى نهار الثلاثاء في العشرون من شهر حزيران على يد افقر عباد الله تعالى الحقير المسكين الدليل مرقص بزي كاهن وقد كتب بهمة وسعي الاخ الروحاني وكاهن الله الحقاني المحب التجميل لكنيسة الله المقدسه الرسولية الشيخ الخوري يوحنا الشهير بنسبه الكريم عن بيت زنده اطال الله تعالى بقاه ويعطيه ما يتمناه والعمل بما يرضاه بشفاعة العذرى وجميع القديسين وكان التاريخ سنه ١٦٨٣ مسيحي

Completed is this holy and noble book which is the first part of the Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew, on Tuesday June 20 by the hand of the poorest servant of God, the humble Marqus in the dress of a priest. He copied it according to the will and effort of the spiritual brother, the real priest of God, who loved to decorate the Holy Apostolic Church of God aš-šayḥ presbyter Yūḥannā from a well-known family Zindah. May Almighty God give him long life and whatever he desires and make him act according to His will, with the intercessions of the Virgin and all saints. The date is 1683 of the Christian era.

23- Bzummār, Our Lady Convent Ar. 224 (July 1684)²⁹

Content: The Spiritual Meadow

Title:

كتاب بستان الرهبان

Colophon

تم كتاب البستان بعون الملك العزيز ذو السلطان على يد الحقير الفقير المسكين المعرق في المائمه والخطايا الطالب الى خالق البرايا الصفح والغفران ذو الجود الواهب المناة الذي لم يستحق ان يذكر اسمه لاجل كثرة خطاياها ووفور اثمه مرقص بزي كاهن الأرثوذكسي مذهبا الحلبي موطنا وذلك في اليوم التاسع والعشرين من شهر تموز المبارك سنة ٧١٩٢ لادم الموافق للهجرة سنة ١٠٩٥ وبالله الاعتماد

Completed is the Meadow with the help of the Almighty and strong king, by the hand of the humble and poor, full of sins and iniquities who asks the Creator of the creations the forgiveness and clemency, Source of goodness and presents, who is unworthy to mention his name for the number of his sins and iniquities Marqus in the dress of a priest, Orthodox in confession, Alepian in residency, on the day July 29 of the year 7192 after Adam, equivalent to 1095 A.H. In God is trust.

²⁹ No catalogue. Accessed online on vhmml:
https://w3id.org/vhmml/readingRoom/view/133631

24- Vatican Ar. 77 (1684)³⁰

Content: The Spiritual Meadow

Title:

كُتاب بستان الرهبان

Colophon

تم البستان في اخبار الرهبان مما جمعه الآباء الأخيار ودونوه في الكتب بعد فحوص شديد ونصه غزير مدين وذلك على ما وجد في نسخة الأصلي بالتمام والكمال وذلك على يد احقر الوري الذليل المسكين مرقص بزي كاهن الملكي مذهباً وقد كتب برسمه الاخ الوديع الكلي الورع محب الكتب الالهيه ومقتني اثار الرسل الابصطل مزين كنيسة الله تعالى بيدين ملكيين الشيخ انخوري يوحنا الملقب بابن زنده الماروني مذهباً وقد كتبه لنفسه دون غيره الله يجعله مبارك عليه ويلهمه العمل بما به سطور بشفاة العدرى امين وذلك في سنة ٧١٩٣ لادم سنة ١٦٨٤ للتجسد سنة ١٠٩٥ للهجره

Completed is, with a lot of care, all the Meadow, a long text, composed and written by the fathers [copied] from the original by the hand of the humblest and poor of the humankind Marqus in the dress of a priest, melkite by confession, he copied it for the kind and most pious brother who loves the Holy books and follows the path of the apostles, who adorns the Church of God with royal hands, aš-šayḥ (the elder?), the priest Yūḥannā known as Ibn Zindah, Maronite by confession, we wrote (i.e., commissioned) it for himself. May God make it blessed for him and inspire him to act according to its lines (i.e., words), by the intercessions of the Virgin. Amen. Year 7193 after Adam, 1684 of the Incarnation, 1095 A.H.³¹

25- Vatican, Sbath 49 (1 September 1685)³²

Content

1- *Expositio fidei* of Athanasius of Alexandria

Title:

البرهان في تثبيت الإيمان

2- *Topoi* and prophecies from the Old Testament on the life of Christ

No title

3- The Apology of Gerasimos higoumen of the Monastery Saint Simon in Aleppo

³⁰ Accessed online: https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.ar.77.

³¹ Between September 1, 1684 and October 28, 1685.

³² Sbath, *Bibliothèque de manuscrits Paul Sbath*, I, pp. 41–42; Accessed online: https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Sbath.49.

Title:

كتاب الكافي في معاني الشافي لجراسيموس رئيس دير القديس ماري سمعان العجايبى الحلبي

Colophon 1, f. 106v

كل كتاب البرهان في تثبيت الايمان بعون الملك الحنان ويتلوه شهادات الانبيا المسطره في كتبهم المقدسه على يد احقر الورى الفقير الذليل الكثير الخطايا والمآثم والكثير الجرائم الغير مستحق ان يذكر اسمه لاجل كثرة خطاياهم ووفور اثمهم مرقص بزي كاهن خادم كنيسة سنتنا السيده < > وقد كتب الى الرجل الدين الوديع الكلي الورع المقتني اثار الرسل بالديانته البهيه والسيرة المرضيه الشيخ الخوري يوحنا الشهير بان زنده خادم كنيسه القديس مار الياس الحى بحروسه حلب من انفر جماعة المكرمين وهم اخوتنا الموارنه جعله الله مبارك عليه وقد جرى ذلك في الاول من شهر أيلول سنة ٧١٩٤ لادم سنة ١٦٨٦ للتجسد وسنة ١٠٩٧ للهجره ويرجوا الكاتب الرحمه من القاري ومن السامع امين

Completed is the Book of the *Expositio fidei* by the help of the gentle King, followed by the witnesses of the Prophets written in the Holy Bible, by the hand of the humblest of the humankind and poor, full of sins and iniquities, unworthy to mention his name for the number of his sins and iniquities Marqus in the dress of a priest, servant of the church of our Lady < >. He copied it for the most pious and kind man who the path of the apostles in the splendid religion and satisfying life [to God], aš-šayḥ, the priest Yūḥannā known as Ibn Zindah, servant of the church of Saint Elias in the protected Aleppo, the most distinguished of our honorable brothers the Maronites, may God make it blessed for him. This happened the first of September year 7194 after Adam, 1686 of the Incarnation and 1097 A.H. [...]

Colophon 2, f. 261v

كل كتاب <المسائل في السيد> بعون الله تعالى على يد احقر الورى مرقص بزي كاهن وقد كتب برسم الاخ الاكرم الشيخ <الخوري> يوحنا <الشهير بان زنده> الله يجعله مباركاً وذلك في سنة ١٦٨٦ مسيحيه

Completed is the Book <of the Questions about the Lord> with the help of the Almighty God by the hand of the poorest of the humankind Marqus in the dress of a priest. He copied it for its commissioner the most generous aš-šayḥ, <the priest> Yūḥannā <known as Ibn Zindah>, may God make it blessed, year 1686 Christian.

26- Dayr aš-Šuwayr, Ordre Basilien Choueirite 347 (1686)

Content: Christopher's Libellus

Title:

كتاب البرهان في تثبيت الإيمان وهو لاينا القديس صفرونيوس المكنى بقم المسيح ارسله إلى رومية في أمانة الجامع المقدسة الستة

Colophon

كل كتاب البرهان في تثبيت الايمان للقديس النفيس صفرونيوس الملقب بقم المسيح في السابع من شهر كانون الاول سنة سبع الاف مائه وخمسة وتسعين لادم عليه السلام الموافق الف ثمانية وتسعين بيد افقر عباد الله تعالى واذل اولاد المعمودية المقدسه مرقص بزي كاهن الملكي المذهب وقد كتب برسم الرجل الخير الدين نخر اقرانه ووحيده دهره وزمانه المتوج بتاج الفخر والكمال والمتسربل حلل العز والجمال الشيخ الخوري يوحنا الشهير بابن زنده زاده الله من انعامه الوافره ونواله الله الاخره بشفاعه العذرى الطاهره امين

Completed is the Book of the *Expositio fidei* of the precious Sophronius known as Christostomus on the 7th of December of the year 7195 after Adam, peace be on him, equivalent to 1098 [A.H.] by the hand of the poorest servant of Almighty God and the lesser of the sons of the holy baptism Marqus in the dress of a priest, it was written for its commissioner, the righteous and outstanding man, honor of his fellows, crowned with honor and perfection, bearer of the glory and the beauty, aš-šayḥ, the priest Yūḥannā known as Ibn Zindah, may God add to his numerous graces and grant him the everlasting life, with the intercession of the pure Virgin.

27- Vatican, Sbath 90 (April 1688)³³

Content: The Spiritual Meadow; John Chrysostom; Nilus

Colophon

تم على يد ... مرقص بزي كاهن الكاتب الخادم في كنيسة حلب وقد كتب برسم ... الشدياق الياس ابن حنا حلواني وكان الفراغ ١٨ نيسان ١٦٨٨

Completed by the hand of ... Marqus in the dress of priest, the scribe, servant of the Church of Aleppo. It was commissioned by the Archdeacon Elias son of John Ḥalawānī. Finalized on April 18, 1688.

28- Jbeil, Dayr al-banat 59 (1689)³⁴

Content: Homilies of Athanasius, Patriarch of Jerusalem

Title

مواظ شريفة التي لاينا الجليل في القديسين اثناسيوس بطريرك اورشليم

³³ Cf. *Bibliothèque de manuscrits Paul Sbath*, I, p. 58.

³⁴ New call number: Kaslik, Holy Spirit University 691.

Colophon

تمت المواظ الشريفة على يد الفقير المسكين الذليل الخاطي مرقص بزي كاهن في الخامس من شهر تشرين الاول من شهر سنة سبعة الاف ومائة <وسته> وتسعين لادم الموافقة لسني الهجرة الف ومائة تاريخ صحيح. وقد كتب برسم الرجل الخير الدين الورع المحب الاعتنا بالكتب الدينية والديانة الكاثوليكية (الاسم محي)

Completed are the holy homilies by the hand of the poor, humble sinner Marqus in the dress of a priest on October 5, month of the year 719 <8> after Adam, equivalent of the year 1100 A.H. which a correct date. It was commissioned by the good-maker and pious man who takes care of the religious books and lover of the universal religion (his name is deleted)

29- Diyarbakir, Meryem Ana Kilisesi 178 (1691)³⁵

Content: Lectionary

Title:

كتاب الانجيل الطاهر والمصباح المنير الزاهر

Colophon

تم بيد العبد الفقير الى ربه الملتجى الى رحمة مولاه الذليل المسكين الغير مستحق ان يذكر اسمه لاجل كثرة خطاه ووفور اثمه بالاسم لا بالفعل مرقص بزي كاهن الارثوذكسي المذهب قاطن حلب يومئذ وذلك في نهار الجمعة ثالث وعشر من شهر اب المبارك من شهر سنة سبعة الاف مائة تسعة وتسعين لادم الموافق للهجرة خامس عشر ذي الحجة من شهر سنة الف ومائة واثنين يرجوا من قدس كل من اطلع على هذه الاسطر الحقيره يطلب له الغفران من البارى عز وجل ويرجوا من القاري الرحمه ومن السامع امين

Completed by the hand of the servant, poor to God, who finds refuge in the mercy of his Lord, the humble, unworthy to mention his name for the number of his sins and iniquities, in name not in acts, Marqus in the dress of a priest, orthodox by confession, resident in Aleppo at that time, on Friday 13th of the blessed month August of the year 7199 after Adam, equivalent to 15th of the month Dhulhijja of the year 1102 [...]

30- Baghdad, The Iraq Museum 820 (1693)³⁶

Content: History of the Roman emperors

Title:

الدر المنظوم في اخبار ملوك الروم

³⁵ Accessed online on vhmml: <https://w3id.org/vhmml/readingRoom/view/122762>.

³⁶ Catalogue n° 89.

According to the catalogue, the scribe is:

الخوري مرقص الملكي وهو يرسم ابراهيم عبد المسيح من الطائفة الكلدانية ٢٧ ايلول ١٦٩٣

[Completed by the hand] of Marqus the Melkite for its commissioner Ibrahim 'Abd al-Masîḥ from the Chaldean community September 27th, 1693.

31- Bzummār, Our Lady Convent Ar. 216 (1700)³⁷

Content: Gospel

Title

المصحف المنيف الانجيل الشريف الزهبي الطاهر والمصباح المنير الزاهر المنسوب الى الأربعة الانجيليين متى ومرقص ولوقا ويوحنا القديسين

Colophon, f. 125r

نجز الانجيل الطاهر اي الاربعه قراة كما هو موجود وذلك في السادس عشر من شهر تشرين الاول من شهر سنة ٧٢٠٨ لادم عليه السلام الموافق للهجرة سنة ١١١٢ سنة وذلك على يد افقر عباد الله واقل خدام الكنيسة الذي لم يستحق ان يذكر اسمه من كثرة خطاياها ووفور اثمه مرقص بزي كاهن يرجو من السامع الرحمة ومن القاري امين

Completed is the Pure Gospel which is the four readings as it is known, on the 16th of October, month of the year 7208 after Adam peace be on him, year 1112 A.H., by the hand of the poorest servant of God and lesser of the servants of the Church who is unworthy to mention his name for the number of his sins and iniquities Marqus in the dress of a priest, he asks whoever hears or reads [this Gospel] mercy. Amen.

32- Humayra, Monastery Saint George 38 (1706)³⁸

Content : Gospel

Title

كتاب الانجيل الطاهر والمصباح المنير الزاهر

Colophon

اعلم يا اخي وقاك الله تعالى اتنا كتبنا هذا الانجيل الشريف على انجيل بخط المرحوم الارشدياكون بولص ابن المرحوم البطريرك كبير مكاريوس الانطاكي الحلبي وذكر المرحوم في تاريخه بانه قابله على انجيل الرومي ثلاث مرات وصححه الى الغاية وبين استيخوناته ثم وحرره على نسخته قبليه محرره بخط الأخ الاسعد سمعان ابن أبو نصر الشماس بالاسم فهكذا

³⁷ No catalogue. Accessed online on vhmml:

<https://w3id.org/vhmml/readingRoom/view/133623>.

³⁸ Accessed online on vhmml: <https://w3id.org/vhmml/readingRoom/view/125985>

ذاكر المرحوم في تاريخه والمسكين الفقير الذليل العديم المعرفة القليل الحسنة والكثير السيئات اقل خدام الكنيسة واصغر أولاد البيعة الارثوذكسية مرقص بالاسم كاهن قد تمت نساخته هذا المصحف الشريف نهار الخميس سابع عشر شهر اب المبارك من شهر سنة سبعة الاف ومايتين وأربعة عشر لكون العالم واما للتجسد الإلهي الف وسبعماية وستة وللهجرة سنة ١١١٧

We inform you, my brother, may God protect you, that we copied this Holy Gospel from a Gospel handwritten by the forgiven [i.e., dead] archdeacon Paul son of the forgiven kyr Macarius the Alepian of Antioch, in his History, he mentioned that he compared it with the Roman [i.e., Byzantine] Gospel three times and fully corrected it and showed its stichons,³⁹ then he compared it with the Coptic version transcribed by the most blessed brother As'ad ibn Abū Naṣr a deacon in name, that is what he mentioned in his History. And the poor, humble, modest, ignorant, who has less qualities and more clumsiness, the lesser of the servants of the Church and sons of the Orthodox Church Marqus, a priest in name [is the scribe]. This Holy Book was completed on Thursday 17th of the blessed month August of the year 7214 of the creation of the world, 1706 of the Incarnation and 1117 A.H.

NOTE OF POSSESSION

33- Paris, BnF Ar. 304 (1663)⁴⁰

نظر في هذا الكتاب المبارك المسمى لسعيد ابن بطريق المتطبب احقر الوري مرقص يرسم خوري فرايناه غايه ونهايه من الاخبار والتواريخ الملوك السالفين من حين تكوين ابونا ادم عليه السلام الى الاسكندر ومن الاسكندر الى مجي المسيح ومن مجي المسيح الى تملك الاسلام ومن تملك الاسلام الى خلافه الراضي ابو العباس فلما رايناه على غرضنا فاستملكته انا الفقير المذكور اسمي اعلاه بالثمن اللايق به والان فهو ملكي وتحت تصرفي لاجل المطالعه لتتزيه الخاطر فما لاحدا سلطان من الله تعالى ان يغيره عن صاحبه المذكور بوجه من الوجوه ولا بحيله من الحيل ولا يرهنه ولا يسترهه ولا يستعيره ولا يطمع عليه ولا يخفيه جدا كان او مزحا الا برضا صاحبه المذكور كل من خالف ما سطرناه كاتنا من كان يكون حظه مع يودس الدافع الويل ثم الويل لمن رضي لنفسه ذلك جرى وحرر في اليوم الاول من ايلول من شهر سنة سبعة الاف ميه اثنين وسبعين لادم

Have looked into this blessed book attributed to Sa'id ibn al-Biṭrīq the physician, the most humble of the humankind Marqus, a priest in name, and we found it full of stories of the kings [...] so I bought it, me, whose name is mentioned above, for the price that it is worse, now it is my own to use it and read it for my entertainment, no one has the right to change its ownership [...], written on the first of September month of the year 7172.

³⁹ Short verses read before the Gospel.

⁴⁰ Manuscript accessed online: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b11004244g>

MIḤĀYĪL IBN ʿASSĀF IBN SRŪR, COLLEAGUE IN CALLIGRAPHY

Like Marqus, Miḥāyīl ibn ʿAssāf ibn Srūr names the monk Anthony as his master of calligraphy. Future investigations may show that Anthony had more disciples.

34- Balamand, Monastery of Our Lady 75 (1642)

وكان الفراغ من نساخة هذا السنكسار المبارك يوم الخميس في | عشرين من شهر كانون الثاني من شهر سنة سبع
الاف مايه | وخمسين لا بونا ادم عليه افضل السلام وكهن تطلع في هذا | السنكسار المبارك ولقا فيه نقص او اغلط
واصلحه يصلح الله حاله ويدعي لك <حاتيه> | بغفران الخطايا والمآثم [المآثم] ليكون له نظير من الواعد الصادق
والكلام صفة | المتكلم والكاتب متعلم ولا تعتب عليه الذي لم يستحق ان يذكر اسمه | من كثرة خطاياها ووفور ائمه
مخايل ابن عساف ابن سرور من قرية كفرهم | من معاملة حماه كتبه لمعلمه الراهب انطونيوس دون غيره فما لاحداً
سلطان <من الله> | ان يغيره عن صاحبه المذكور لا بوجه من الوجوه ولا بجيله من الخليل | وكل من حالف [خالف]
ذلك حضه مع يوطس الذي اباع سيده والويل ثم الويل لمن <رضي لنفسه ذلك> | ذلك | والسبح لله دائماً

ZAHĀRIYYĀ IBN AL-ḤŪRĪ MARQUS AL-KĀTĪB

Zahariyyā was active between 1673 and 1712. We know from the manuscript of Saint Petersburg, that in 1686, Zahariyyā was Anagnost or lector.

Here is an extensive list of his manuscripts:

Aleppo, Maronite Archbishopric 4, 58 (1697), 70, 72, 1449; Balamand, Monastery of Our Lady 114 (1698); Humayra, Monastery of Saint George 29 (1673); Kaslik, Holy Spirit University 461 (1712); Paris, BnF, ar. 223 (1691); Saint-Petersburg, Institute of the Oriental Manuscripts of the Academy of Sciences in Russia C 270/656 (1686); Vatican, Sbath 182 (1695).

Some examples of colophons where the name of Marqus is mentioned are given below.

35- Saint Petersburg, Institute of the Oriental Manuscripts of the Academy of Sciences in Russia C 270/656 (1686)

Content: John of Damascus and Paul of Antioch

Colophon f. 109r

علقه بيده الفانيه العبد الضعيف النحيف المستغفر لباريه عن ذنبه التايب الى الله ربه الذي لم يستاهل ان يذكر اسمه بين
بني المعموديه لكثرة خطاياها ووفور ائمه زخريا برسم اغنسط ابن انخوري مرقص الكاتب في مدينة حلب وقد كان
النجاز من هذا الكتاب المبارك نهار السبت خامس من شهر أيلول من شهر سنة سبعة الاف مايه اربعة وتسعين لادم

Copied with his mortal hand by the weak and feeble servant who asks the forgiveness of his Creator for his sin and repents to God his Lord, whose name is unworthy to be mentioned among the sons of the baptism for the number of his sins and iniquities Zahariyyā, an anagnost in name, son of the priest Marqus al-kātib in

the city of Aleppo. This book was completed on the blessed Saturday the 5th of the month September of the year 7194 after Adam.

36- Balamand, Monastery of Our Lady 114 (1698)

Colophon

قد كل بعون الله علي يد كاتبه الفقير زاخريا بن الخوري مرقس الكاتب بمدينة حلب سنة ١١١٠ هجرية

Completed with the help of God by the hand of the poor scribe Zaḥariyyā son of the priest Marqus al-kātib (secretary?) in the city of Aleppo, year 1110 A.H.

HIS DISCIPLE TŪMĀ IBN SULAYMĀN

Tūmā was born in 1652. When he was 14, he copied the Lectionary probably under the supervision of his tutor Marqus (n° 46). The last known manuscript by this disciple was copied in 1673, when he was 21 years old (n° 50).

Here is an extensive list of his manuscripts: Aleppo, Maronite Archbishopric 6 (1673), 7 (1673), 1271 (1672); Lataqia, Greek Orthodox Archbishopric 20 (1670); Sarba (Jūniyah), Ordre Basilien Alepin 19 (1667); Jerusalem, Greek Orthodox Patriarchate 222 (1063).

Some examples of colophons where the name of Marqus is mentioned are given below.

37- Jerusalem, Greek Orthodox Patriarchate 222 (1063)

Content: Lectionary

Colophon

نجزت المشاهدة بالتمام والكمال على ما وجدنا في الانجيل الطبع (؟) لا زوداً ولا نقصان والحمد لله وحده وكان النجاز من نساخة هذا الانجيل الشريف نهار الخميس المبارك الثامن عشر من شهر كانون الثاني المبارك من شهر سنة ٧١٧٤ لادم عليه السلام الموافق للهجره سنة ١٠٧٤ للهجره الاسلاميه وذلك بيد افقر العباد واقل اولاد البيعة المقدسه الارثوذكسية الذي لم يستحق ان يذكر اسمه لاجل كثرة خطاياها ووفور اثمها توما بن سليمان تلميذ الخوري مرقس الكفرهايمي اصلاً الأرثوذكسي مذهباً ويوميذن قاطن بمحمية حلب المحروسه وكان في العمر ابن أربعة عشر سنة ويا واقف لا تعتب وكل من وجده في هذا الانجيل الطاهر الشريف نقص او غلط واصلحه يصلح السيد المسيح احوالاً دنيا واخره ورحمة الله على الكاتب والقاري والقائل امين

Completed is *al-Mušāharah*⁴¹ in perfection and exactness as we found it without addition or omission, Glory to God alone. This Holy Gospel was completed on the

⁴¹ *Al-Mušāharah* is the last part of the lectionary where we find the readings for the saints' feasts.

blessed Thursday 18th of the blessed January of the year 7174 after Adam peace be on him, equivalent to 1074 A.H., by the hand of the poorest of humankind and lesser of the Holy Orthodox Church who is unworthy to mention his name for the number of his sins and iniquities, Tūmā ibn Sulaymān, disciple of the priest Marqus from Kafr Buhum by origin, orthodox by confession, resident in Aleppo at that time, a fourteen years old [...]

38- Sarba (Jūniyah), Ordre Basilien Alepin 19 (1667)

Content: Psalter

Colophon, p. 218

علقه بيده الفانيه العبد الضعيف النحيف توما بن سليمان الكفرهايي تلميذ الخوري مرقص الكاتب بحروسه حلب سنة ١٠٧٧ للهجره

The weak servant Tūmā ibn Sulaymān, disciple of the priest Marqus al-kātib copied it by his hand in the protected Aleppo in the year 1077 A.H.

39- Aleppo, Maronite Archbishopric 7 (1673)

Content: Old Testament

Colophon

ولما كان الفراغ من كتابة حكمة يشوع ابن سيراخ نهار الثلثا المبارك العاشر من شهر حزيران المبارك من شهر سنة ٧١٨٢ سبعة الاف ومايه واثنين وثمانون لادم الموافق سنة ١٠٨٤ الف اربعة وثمانون للهجره الاسلاميه وذلك على يد افقر الوري واقل اولاد البيعه المقدسه الارثوذكسيه الذي لم يستحق ان يذكر اسمه لاجل كثرة خطاياها ووفور اثمه العبد الفقير اليه تعالى توما بن سليمان تلميذ الخوري مرقس الكاتب في مدينة حلب المحميه وكل من قرا في هذا الكتاب المبارك يدعي لكاتبه بالمعفره واحسن الله العاقبه الى خدامه

Completed is the Book of the Wisdom of Joshua son of Sirach on the blessed Tuesday 10th of the blessed month June of the year 7182 after Adam, equivalent to 1084 A.H., by the hand of the poorest of the humankind and lesser of the sons of the Holy Orthodox Church, who is unworthy to mention his name for the number of his sins and iniquities the servant, poor to Him Almighty, Tūmā ibn Sulaymān disciple of the priest Marqus al-kātib in the city of Aleppo the protected [...]

SCHOOL OF THE RŪM (DIDASCALION?)

Marqus copied the manuscript of Dayr aš-Šuwayr 179 (1664/6) at the School of the Rūm. This School is also mentioned by another scribe Ibrāhīm ibn al-ḥāğğ Ġriğūryūs ibn al-ḥāğğ ‘Abdallah ibn al-Ḥūrī Maṣūr al-Kfurbhāmī who had copied the same work ten years earlier. According to this scribe, this was his first manuscript.

40- Diyarbakır, Meryem Ana Kilisesi 56; 1-1/8 (1657)

Colophon

تم وكل هذا الرسايل المبارك بيد العبد الفقير الى ربه تعالى ابراهيم بن الحاج غريغوريوس بن الحاج عبدالله بن الخوري منصور الكنفر بهامي قاطن يومئذ بحروسه حلب قد كتبه في صغره في مكتب التعليم اول كتاب كتبه فكل من راي فيه نقص او غلط واصلحه بمقابلة نسخه اخرى صحيحه اصلح الله حاله في الدنيا والاخره وكان النجاز منه في اوائل سنه سبع الاف مائه خمسه وستين لادم الموافق الف خمسه وخمسين للهجره اصلح الله العاقبه الى خير

Completed and finalized are the blessed Epistles by the hand of the servant, poor to God, Ibrāhīm ibn al-ḥāḡḡ Ġriḡūryūs ibn al-ḥāḡḡ ‘Abdallah ibn al-Ḥūrī Maṣūr al-Kfurbhāmī, resident in Aleppo at that time, he wrote while still young in the didascalion. It was the first book he copied whoever finds missing words, mistakes and corrected it by comparison with another accurate copy may God fix his conditions in this life and in the other one. Completed in the beginning of the year 7165 after Adam, equivalent to 1055 A.H.

FORGOTTEN PAGE WHILE WRITING

41- Beirut, Bibliothèque orientale 1359, f. 20v⁴²

Text:

وقع السهو وجل من لا يغفل والسيح لله دائما

The lapse happened, Glory to Him who makes no mistake, and Praise to God forever.

رمانى زمانى بعدما كنت رابص ولاح براسي الشيب وانصرف العمري رمقت بعني للزمان اصبته يجرعني كاسا امر من الصبري

My time (age) threw me after laying in peace and grey hair appeared on my head. My life passed suddenly, time willing to make me drink a bitterer cup than a remedy.

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⁴² See no 2.

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COLOPHONS IN ARABIC AND PERSIAN TREATISES ON THE MATHEMATICAL SCIENCES AND RELATED SUBJECT MATTERS

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In this paper, we trace colophons in Arabic and Persian treatises on the mathematical and related sciences from the tenth to the nineteenth century across Islamicate societies in Asia and Africa. We ask whether there are specific features that characterize them in those disciplines in dependence on the time, the locality or the languages in which they were either produced or copied and whether there are recognizable trends that demarcate periods of change and set geographical, political or cultural boundaries. Our answers will be preliminary and limited, because such questions presuppose the systematic collection of a huge range of data and their digital investigation. Although we have collected colophons over the years and have digital access to various manuscript collections, our material was not assembled with the direct aim of writing a history of colophons in the mathematical and related sciences. We assembled colophons, because we collected texts on specific subject matters such as Euclid's *Elements* or specific times and regions such as the Timurid, Ottoman and Safavid Empires in the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Despite the methodological shortcomings, our random set of colophons allows a number of observations, which will be helpful for a more systematic approach to the questions of which kind of information was stored in colophons and thus was considered desirable, useful or even necessary in different contexts. We report our results in eight sections. Section 1 highlights the advantages that a systematic, large-scale investigation of colophons can yield. Section 2 surveys information about the time of emergence of colophons in treatises on the mathematical and related sciences. Section 3 lists religious elements of colophons. Section 4 presents the main types of colophons found in texts from the mathematical and related sciences. Section 5 discusses socio-cultural components. Section 6 focuses on statements on the history of the treatise provided in colophons. Section 7 describes formal configurations and placements of colophons. Section 8 presents a few excep-

tional colophons. At the end, we offer some preliminary conclusions about what colophons can contribute to the history of the mathematical and related science in Islamicate societies. The term mathematical and related sciences is used in this paper to encompass the range of disciplinary fields that historical actors counted among the mathematical sciences, including different forms of geography and mapmaking.

1. TWO LIMITED SYSTEMATIC EXAMPLES

In this chapter, we wish to present two small examples for what a systematic, large-scale investigation of colophons in mathematical and related texts might add to our understanding of the history of those sciences in a concrete Islamicate society on the one hand and of the history of two modern library collections in western Europe and the Middle East on the other. The first example concerns the two Safavid centuries and the second the digital collection published by Qatar Library in cooperation with the British Library.

For the case of the Safavid dynasty (r. 1504–1722), Brentjes collected in 2010 information from 241 dated Arabic and Persian mathematical and related texts copied in Safavid Iran from the early sixteenth to the early eighteenth centuries. This is the only sample that allows some comments on the presence of colophons and their components. Of the 241 colophons, 143, that is almost 60%, gave in addition to the date the name of the copyist. 67 colophons, that is *c.* 28%, name the place where the text was copied. 11 colophons, that is roughly 5%, mention either a madrasa or a court. Seven colophons, slightly below 3%, report specific activities and only one contains a reference to an owner.¹

From the perspective of the digitized part of two collections in western Europe and the Middle East, which were shaped according to changing conditions of access to manuscripts from Islamicate societies and changing policies of collecting, a diachronic effort was undertaken with the goal to discover possible differences with regard to content, structure and configuration of colophons. These selected collections were brought together in the Qatar Digital Library, a joint electronic publication of the Qatar National Library and the British Library. This digital publication contains about 110 astronomical and mathematical manuscripts in Arabic and Persian.² The first two copies of mathematical and related texts are listed in this col-

¹ Sonja Brentjes, “The Mathematical Sciences in Safavid Iran. Questions and Perspectives,” in *Muslim Cultures in the Indo-Iranian World during the early modern and modern periods*, edited by Dennis Hermann and Fabrizio Speziale, (Islamkundliche Untersuchungen 290, Bibliothèque iranienne 69), Tehran: Institut de Recherche en Iran, Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 2010, 325–402, 373–394.

² https://www.qdl.qa/en/search/site/?f%5B0%5D=document_source%3Aarchive_source&f%5B1%5D=source_content_type%3AManuscript

lection for the twelfth century.³ One is Abū l-Rayḥān al-Bīrūnī's (973–d. after 1053) astronomical opus magnum *al-Qānūn al-mas'ūdī* (The Canon for Mas'ūd).

تمت المقالة الحادية عشر وتم بتمامها القانون المسعودي تصنيف أبي الريحان البيروني والله الحمد والمنة بمدينة السلم ببغداد في شهر ربيع الأول من سنة سبعين وخمسة مائة هجرية والحمد لله رب العالمين. قوبل بها مما نقلت منه في محرم سنة إحدى وسبعين وخمسة مائة هجرية عربية والسلم.⁴

The other is a copy of Aḥmad b. Abī Sa'd al-Harawī's (fl. 930–990) revised edition of the Arabic translation of Menelaus of Alexandria's (d. c. 130) *Kitāb Mānālāūs fī l-ashkāl al-kuriya* (Menelaus's Book on the Spherical Figures).⁵ This copy was completed in Damascus on 4 Rabī' II 548/29 June 1153 by a scribe called Ismā'īl. His *Vorlage* was a text commented on by the physician and well-known scholar of the mathematical sciences, Najm al-Dīn Abū al-Futūḥ b. Muḥammad b. al-Sarī, also known as Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ (d. 1154), whom we will again meet in Section 6 when talking about another colophon that elucidates his involvement with an Arabic version of Euclid's *Phaenomena*.

تمت المقالة الثالثة من كتاب منالوس في الأشكال الكرية وتم الكتاب بأسره. وذلك في يوم الإثنين رابع ربيع الآخر سنة ثمان وأربعين وخمسة مائة للهجرة النبوية. الحمد لله رب العالمين وصلواته على سيدنا محمد النبي وآله الطاهرين وسلم تسليماً حسينا الله ونعم الوكيل قال إسماعيل نسخت هذه النسخة بدمشق من نسخة سيدنا الشيخ الأجل الإمام العالم الفاضل الزاهد نجم الدين سيد الحكماء بديع الزمان أبي الفتوح أحمد بن السري أطال الله بقاءه وحرس نعماه.⁶

Interestingly enough, Ismā'īl either added or copied a previous addition of a set of diagrams only to the text that the heading identifies as having been transferred from an uncorrected version of some translation according to the first codification.⁷ Such a collection of diagrams without text is a rare occasion among mathematical

³ https://www.qdl.qa/en/search/site/?f%5B0%5D=document_source%3Aarchive_source&f%5B1%5D=source_content_type%3AManuscript&f%5B2%5D=date_range%3A%5B1100%20TO%201199%5D

⁴ MS London, British Library, Or. 1997, f. 262a. Except for one correction, we copied the colophon in its entirety from the record provided by qdl. In the digitized manuscript, parts of it are difficult to read.

https://www.qdl.qa/en/archive/81055/vdc_100022880536.0x000001;

https://www.qdl.qa/en/archive/81055/vdc_100023514427.0x000008a

⁵ See Nathan Sidoli and Takanori Kusuba, "Al-Harawī's Version of Menelaus' *Spherics*," *Suḥayl* 13 (2014), 149–212 and Nathan Sidoli, Review of "Menealus' *Spherics*: Early Translation and al-Māhānī/al-Harawī's Version, by Roshdi Rashed and Athanase Papadopoulos," *Aestimatio* 14 (2019–2020), 14–21, in particular 17.

⁶ MS London, British Library, Or 13127, f. 51a.

https://www.qdl.qa/en/archive/81055/vdc_100000038406.0x000001;

https://www.qdl.qa/en/archive/81055/vdc_100023511683.0x0000071

⁷ *Ibid.*, f. 52a.

treatises before the early modern period. Even rarer is the termination of such a pictorial collection by a colophon, as is here the case. It does not show a principled deviation from the colophons below texts presented in Section 2.

تمت أشكال كريات منالوس وهي تسعون شكلاً. والحمد لله وحده وصلوته على محمد وآله وسلم تسليماً.⁸

From the thirteenth century, many more copies of mathematical and related treatises (30) were incorporated into the Qatar Digital Library and many (26) of them contain colophons, albeit mostly very short ones. For the fourteenth century, only fourteen mathematical and related texts are included in the Qatar Digital Library, nine of which contain colophons, some being very brief stating only that the book is completed and adding a few religious formulas, while others are elaborate. The most interesting colophons terminate three copies of two geographical texts, one by Suhrāb (first half tenth century) and the other by Muḥammad b. Zakariyā⁹ al-Qazwīnī (d. 1282). We will present them in Section 6. Of the twenty mathematical and related texts contained in qdl for the fifteenth century, sixteen terminate with a colophon. For the sixteenth century, qdl includes 31 mathematical and related texts, of which 25 have a colophon. Four of the remaining ones break off before being finished.

This survey indicates an almost stable distribution of colophons among the entire set of manuscripts included in qdl per century between 1200 and 1900. But since it is unclear how the selection of each set was determined this result is not representative. It only confirms two well-known facts. First, not all texts were finished with a colophon. Second, colophons were an appreciated component of mathematical and related texts.

2. ON THE EMERGENCE OF COLOPHONS IN TREATISES ON THE MATHEMATICAL AND RELATED SCIENCES

Disregarding very few exceptions, mathematical treatises are extant from the tenth century onwards. The number of preserved copies of mathematical texts increases for the twelfth century. It becomes uncountable in the following centuries. Colophons can be found in examples from all those centuries. The oldest colophon by an author that we found copied by a scribe comes from a late-ninth century astrologer.⁹ This suggests that they were an accepted tool for presenting a certain kind of information from very early on. But the spread, regularity of appearance and extent of information differ substantially from text to text. Originally, we assumed that the development of colophons in mathematical texts would show a clear relationship to the development of their titles and introductions. More mathematical texts

⁸ Ibid., f. 55a. https://www.qdl.qa/en/archive/81055/vdc_100023511683.0x000079

⁹ MS London, British Library, Delhi Arabic 1916, vol. 2, 181b;

https://www.qdl.qa/en/archive/81055/vdc_100065934803.0x000001

of the tenth and eleventh centuries seem to lack colophons as they lack titles and introductions than afterwards. But copies of the same kind of texts from later centuries either also lack colophons or offer very meager information of a formal character, mostly combining the statement that a text was finished with a reference to the help or other acts of God. The same observation applies to the spread of colophons through longer texts organized in chapters, sections or other subdivisions. The only copy of Euclid's *Elements* extant from the tenth century closes most of the fifteen books with a colophon of the following kind:

تمت المقالة (عدد) من كتاب إقليدس في الأصول. نقل إسحاق بن حنين وإصلاح ثابت بن قرة الحراني.¹⁰

Occasionally, the following date is added to this form:

في سنة ثلاثة وثمانين وثلاث مئة من الهجرة.¹¹

In the three last genuine Euclidean books this colophon is shortened or altered in the following ways:

تمت المقالة (عدد) من كتاب إقليدس في الأصول.¹²

تمت المقالة (عدد) من كتاب إقليدس في الأصول. والحمد لله رب العالمين.¹³

تمت المقالة (عدد) من كتاب إقليدس في الأصول. إصلاح أبي الحسن ثابت بن قرة الصائغ. والحمد لله رب العالمين.¹⁴

The entire work ends with the simple formula:

تم الكتاب. والحمد لله وحده. وصلى الله على سيدنا محمد النبي وآله وسلامه.¹⁵

The two colophons at the end of Books XIV and XV, which were known to have been added by Hypsikles, differ from the style of the previous ones:

كل إسقلايس الرابع عشر من الكتاب المنسوب إلى إقليدس. وحمداً لله كبيراً.¹⁶

¹⁰ MS Tehran, University Library, 3586, ff. 56b, 77a, 105b, 121a, 140b, 207a, 227b, 357b; MS Tehran, University Library, 2120, f. 12a.

¹¹ MS Tehran, University Library, 3586, ff. 105b, 169b; MS Tehran, University Library, 2120, f. 12a.

¹² MS Tehran, University Library, 3586, f. 429b.

¹³ *ibid.*, f. 399a.

¹⁴ *ibid.*, f. 453a.

¹⁵ *ibid.*, f. 476a.

¹⁶ *ibid.*, f. 370b.

تم القول الخامس عشر لإسقليس من الكتاب المنسوب إلى إقليدس. ولا قوة إلا بالله. وهذين الشكلين هما الخامس من القول الخامس عشر وجد في نسخ كثيرة على هذه الصورة وهي صورة ط وفي نسخة أخرى على هذه الصورة وهي صورة ع.¹⁷

These examples and their scribal forms in the manuscript suggest the following hypothesis for most colophons, but in particular for those in early extant copies: colophons were the result of decisions made by the text's copyist. In copies extant from later centuries, authors of texts also seem to have contributed to how a colophon was structured. We will present a few examples below that speak in favor of this second hypothesis.

A copy of Euclid's *Elements* in the revision by Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (1204–1272) dated to the nineteenth century proceeds in the same manner like the tenth-century copy as regards the closure of each book by a colophon. But the content of each single colophon is less regular and provides less information. As a rule, all colophons begin with the statement that the *maqāla* x is completed and end with some reference to divine support. This format is also preserved for the colophon at the end of the entire text, which is altogether much longer than any of the colophons of the individual books.¹⁸

Examples

Book I: تمت¹⁹.

Book II: تمت المقالة الثانية. والحمد لله والمنة.²⁰

Book III: تمت المقالة الثالثة. والحمد لله وبحسن توفيقه.²¹

Book V: و تمت المقالة الخامسة بعون الله وتوفيقه ومنته.²²

Book VII: تمت المقالة السابعة. والحمد لله على توفيق الإتمام وأسأل الله أن يوفقني لإتمام البواقي.²³

Book X: تمت المقالة العاشرة بحمد الله.²⁴

Book XII: تمت المقالة الثانية عشر والحمد لله ولي التوفيق والهداية.²⁵

¹⁷ *ibid.*, f. 476a.

¹⁸ MS Tehran, University Library, 2286, p. 230.

¹⁹ *ibid.*, p. 24.

²⁰ *ibid.*, p. 55. An almost identical form terminates Book IV, p. 89.

²¹ *ibid.*, p. 77.

²² *ibid.*, p. 120. The same formula with the changed order between *tawfiqihi* and *minnatihi* terminates Books XI and XIV, pp. 195, 227 and two slightly shorter forms, the first without *wa-minnatihi* and the second without *wa-tawfiqihi*, end Books VI and VIII, pp. 120, 141, and Book XIII, p. 221.

²³ *ibid.*, p. 133.

²⁴ *ibid.*, 2286, p. 181.

²⁵ *ibid.*, 2286, p. 208.

Similar observations apply to collections of mathematical texts, whether copied by a single scribe or not. Three different examples shall illustrate this claim.

Example 1: MS Paris, BnF, Arabe 2544

In this manuscript, which contains mostly astronomical texts in Arabic together with one Persian treatise and one Turkish extract from a text on the course of the sun through the zodiac, not all texts contain a colophon. The Turkish text, for instance, and four Arabic texts end without a colophon.²⁶ While many complete texts in the mathematical and related sciences do not contain colophons, in this manuscript the absence of a colophon may reflect the incomplete status of the texts, since they are either sections or epitomes or lack an ending. In one case, a later scribe took the occasion of the space left blank after the finished text to add some information in one of the typical forms in which colophons were appended to a text in later centuries – a triangle:

نُقل هذه الصور من آخر رسالة الفارسي إلى هذه الصورة من رسالة المسماة بمقاصد ذوي الأبواب لأبي على الفارسي
رحمة الله عليه في سنة عشر بعد الألف.²⁷

Another quasi-colophon follows at the end of an astronomical paraphrase combined by the Mamluk timekeeper ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Wafā’ī (1408–1471), who lived in Cairo, from two treatises of two earlier well-known Mamluk timekeepers, namely Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad Mizzī (d. ca. 1350), who lived in Damascus, and Jamāl al-Dīn al-Māridīnī (d. 1406), who lived in Damascus and Cairo.²⁸ It informs the reader about al-Wafā’ī’s request to correct earlier copies of his text, which he transcribed, in accordance with the current copy.

وقال مؤلفها وليعلم الناظر في هذه النسخة إنه قد سبق عدة نسخ فمن وقف ووقع له شيء منها فليصلحه على هذه فإنها
العمدة وما سواها مرجوع عنه. وحسبنا الله ونعم الوكيل. يتلوه جدول.²⁹

Two folios later, a slightly different variant of the same statement was noted in a different hand with an extended colophon at the end:

وقال مؤلفها وليعلم الناظر في هذه النسخة إنه قد سبق عدة نسخ فمن وقف ووقع له شيء منها فليصلحه على هذه فإنها
العمدة وما سواها مرجوع عنه. والحمد لله رب العالمين. وصلى الله تعالى على سيدنا محمد وآله وصحبه وسلم تسليماً.
وحسبنا الله ونعم الوكيل. وقال فرغت من تأليفها في ليلة الخميس ١٧ صفر ٨٤٣ بالروضة المصرية في ليلة الوفا بيت

²⁶ MS Paris, BnF, Arabe 2544, ff. 21a, 44b, 83b, 110a, 114b.

²⁷ Ibid., f. 110a.

²⁸ See David A. King, “The Astronomy of the Mamluks”, *Isis* 74.4 (1983), 531–555, especially 553–555; <https://ismi.mpiwg-berlin.mpg.de/person/8618>.

²⁹ MS Paris, BnF, Arabe 2544, f. 139a.

سيدي أبي الفتح ... حررت هذا الجدول في يوم الجمعة ٥ رمضان المبارك سنة ١٠١٢ بقسطنطينية المحمية حيث³⁰
عن البلية.³¹

This variant indicates that the copyist found it worthwhile to check a second copy for al-Wafā'i's request to the readers and copy it due to its slight differences, which have no impact on the content of the request, but provide an insight where the request had been copied some 250 years earlier. He considered this entire information of such importance that he added his own date and place of writing the passage down. Although we have not seen yet another case of this kind, this example provides the possibility for a third hypothesis: colophons could be separated from their original texts, copied for their own sake and treated as texts that merited their own colophons.

Colophons complete three Arabic and one Persian text.

1. تمت وصلى على سيدنا محمد وآله وسلم.³²
2. تمت الرسالة بعون الله الملك الوهاب في سنة سبع وألف من الهجرة النبوية في لارندة المحروسة.³³
3. نجزت رسالة الكندي في صنعة آلة توجد بها مواضع الشمس والقمر والكواكب. والله الحمد والمنة. رحم الله³⁴ لكاتبها ولمؤلفها ولقارئها ولمن قال بالدعاء لهم ولمن قال آميناً. حرره في سنة ١٠٠٩.
4. أما آنچه ضرورت بود گفتمم واینجا سخن قطع کردیم بتوفیق باری تعالی جلت عظمته والحمد لله رب الوری العالمین. وصلى الله على خير خلقه محمد وآله أجمعين. تم تحرير هذه الرسالة المرغوبة على يد أفقر حافظ حسن بن حافظ مصطفى. رحمهما الله تعالى في شهر جمادى الآخرة سنة عشر وألف.³⁵

These four colophons highlight what we can consider to some degree as some of the standard components, which can be found in many later colophons in mathematical and related texts: dates, names, longer religious statements and sometimes locations and/or institutions. We will discuss these and other features in the following two sections. Examples 3 and 4 offer two other properties that mark the altogether non-standardized nature of colophons in mathematical and related texts: the usage of rare terms for the main reason to begin a colophon, namely that the text has been finished; the usage of two or three³⁶ languages in a colophon. In example 3, the unnamed copyist chose *najaza* to indicate that he had completed his task. The use of the First Person Singular for indicating that the copyist had terminated a task, be it copying or proof-reading, became widespread from about the twelfth

³⁰ The text has: حمت

³¹ *ibid.*, f. 141a.

³² *ibid.*, f. 16a.

³³ *ibid.*, f. 26b.

³⁴ *ibid.*, f. 60a.

³⁵ *ibid.*, f. 106a.

³⁶ An example of a colophon with three languages can be found in a Turkish treatise entitled *Khulāṣat al-hay'a*. MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Ayasofya 2591, f. 94b.

century onwards. In example 4, the Persian scribe Ḥāfiẓ Ḥasan b. Ḥāfiẓ Muṣṭafā starts the colophon with two Persian phrases, before he then continues it only using Arabic. This phenomenon of the dominant use of Arabic in colophons to Persian texts can be observed fairly often.³⁷ Our fourth hypothesis states that this shift in language is probably connected to the importance of religious utterances in the colophon, which are overwhelmingly expressed in the language of Scripture, that is in Arabic.

Example 2: MS Tehran, University Library, 1328

In this manuscript, copies of three treatises, completely or as extracts, by the tenth-century scholar Kūshyār b. Labbān are bound together with an extract from an explanation of Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī on the collection of data about the course of the sun with the help of an astrolabe, two anonymous extracts on a subtype of astrolabes and on surveying joined by a kind of personal note marked by the characteristic term *fāʿida* (benefit).

Each of the copies in this manuscript carries its separate colophon, some of them very brief, presenting only the word *tammāt* (completed).³⁸ In one case, *khatama* (to seal, to close) is used instead of *tamma*, which occurs more rarely.³⁹ Others are longer, adding a religious formula and the name of the scribe of the text (*aṣl*) from which the unnamed scribe had produced the copy extant in this manuscript.⁴⁰ In our experience, providing only the name of an earlier but not that of the recent scribe is unusual. More often, the name of the last copyist is also given, if earlier scribes are listed.⁴¹ The colophon below Kūshyār b. Labbān's copied text *Fī al-ḥisāb al-hindī* (*On the Indian Reckoning*) contains another idiosyncratic feature, because the scribe provides its date not in numbers of whatever format but as a reference to the dating given in his earlier copy of Kūshyār's treatise on the astrolabe.

وتأريخ نسخ أصله كما تقدم في رسالة الأسطرلاب وتأريخ كتابته هكذا.⁴²

Examples 3: A collection of mathematical and astronomical texts

The texts in this collection were composed between the early ninth and approximately the fifteenth century and mostly copied in 1728. It contains Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī's edition of Euclid's *Elements*, several commentaries on parts of the *Elements* from the ninth, tenth and fourteenth centuries plus a few astronomical and astro-

³⁷ MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Lala Ismail Paşa, 288, ff. 69a, 91a.

³⁸ MS Tehran, University Library, 1328, ff. 27b, 30a.

³⁹ *ibid.*, f. 35b.

⁴⁰ *ibid.*, f. 29b.

⁴¹ For examples see Section 7.

⁴² MS Tehran, University Library, 1328, f. 35b.

logical treatises or extracts therefrom. On some of the pages left empty between the individual treatises, readers entered short notes on various problems from the mathematical sciences together with brief extracts or remarks on philosophical and religious matters. In particular the text of the *Elements* is heavily annotated. We chose this collection in the hope to gain some insight in historical changes of colophons. One observation that can be made is that the copies of treatises or extracts composed until the first half of the fourteenth century either contain no colophons or very brief ones, even without explicit indication that the treatise was now finished. An example without a colophon is the anonymous treatise on the aims of Euclid's *Elements*, usually attributed to al-Kindī.⁴³ The copy of Abū l-Ḥasan al-Ahwāzī's (10th–11th centuries) medium-size commentary of Book X of the *Elements* offers after its last section only the formula praising God, the Lord of the Worlds.⁴⁴ The copy of Kamāl al-Dīn al-Fārisī's (d. 1318) discussion of al-Ṭūsī's comment at the end of Book XIII of the *Elements* adds after the end of the proof merely: *wa-l-salām 'alā Muḥammad wa-ālihi*.⁴⁵ It might thus be that treatises composed before 900 and pieces discussing individual problems seldom ended with colophons. Other short pieces in this collection seem to contradict such an assumption. Abū Ja'far al-Khāzin's (10th century) medium-size commentary on the same *book of the Elements* carries a colophon that is free of religious utterances and thus resembles in content the colophons of the tenth-century copy of the *Elements*, which we presented as our starting example in this paper. Its use of *al-qawl* instead of *al-kitāb* and *al-tafsīr* instead of *al-sharḥ* also points to an early origin of the colophon:

تم القول أبي جعفر الخازن في تفسير صدر المقالة العاشرة من كتاب إقليدس في الأصول.⁴⁶

The second short piece questioning our speculation copies an addition at the end of Book XV of the *Elements* that the scribe found in some copies of Euclid's work. It ends with a colophon, which in its content does not follow the more usual forms mostly described above and might suggest through its use of the First Person Singular of the verb *qaṣada* (to intend, to aim at) that it was composed by the commentator.⁴⁷ This open, difficult to classify distribution of colophons whether attached to self-standing commentaries or to additions commenting on a specific mathematical problem or to extracts from astronomical and other treatises and the variation between their content, length and vocabulary does not allow to formulate even a minor hypothesis on developmental trends.

Hence, in the current stage of investigation, we conclude that colophons in the mathematical and related sciences, while widespread, were by no means systema-

⁴³ MS Munich, BSB, Codex ar. 2697, f. 147a.

⁴⁴ *ibid.*, f. 162b.

⁴⁵ *ibid.*, f. 150a.

⁴⁶ *ibid.*, f. 178b.

⁴⁷ *ibid.*, f. 149a.

tized with regard to their content, length and distribution within a long text or a collection of texts, whether copied by a single scribe or not. If this observation can be supported by a large-scale analysis of mathematical and related treatises, it signifies that there was no long-term trend towards standardization, let alone some kind of progressive evolution. On the other hand, the copying of older colophons and the restitution of lost colophons implies that colophons were considered an essential part of a transmitted text.⁴⁸ This does not mean, however, that every author or scribe felt obliged to add a colophon to his text.

3. TYPES OF COLOPHONS

As the above presented examples indicate, colophons can appear in all sorts of variants. The shortest form is a single word. In most cases, that we have found, scribes use the word *tamma*. The next stage encompasses the addition of a single or more religious expressions. The most often used form seems to be that which also includes parts of the name of the scribe and a date. The name usually consists at least of either the *kunya*, which includes the word *abū* for father and the *ism* (name) of a son, or the *laqab* such as the *shams al-dīn* (Sun of the Religion) or *i'timād al-dawla* (the Pillar of the Dynasty) of the scribe plus his *ism* such as Aḥmad and that of his father, for instance, Muḥammad, linked through the word *ibn* (son). The date can provide the year as a number in three forms (the alphanumerical form of the Abjad numbers, a set of three or four Indo-Arabic numerical signs, a verbal expression) or a chronogram. If the date is given in Indo-Arabic numbers, the chronogram is mainly limited to manuscripts produced in South Asia. Like the religious formulas, the number of the components of the name can be greater or smaller. Equally, the date can also include the name of a month, a decade, a day or night and occasionally even the exact time of a day or night, or an Islamic festivity. Rarer, but still appearing relatively often, is the next type. It contains either a place name or the name of an institution or both. A type that also can be found quite often is the one that includes statements about when the writing of the text and its subsequent proofreading were finished, from which type of text, a kind of original (*aṣl*), a copy (*nuskha* or *savād*) or some other type of possibly author-related version (*taḥrīr* or other terms), the copying had been executed. This kind of information can also be rather brief or more extended. Occasionally the title of the copied text alone or together with its author is given. In the case of translations, editions or revisions the names of those actors can also appear. For almost all these variants examples are presented above.

There are numerous other possible pieces of information that colophons may present below mathematical or related texts, although they appear less often than the above-described basic forms. The book title can be embellished by attributes of

⁴⁸ An example of a restituted colophon is found in MS London, British Library, Delhi Arabic 1916, vol. 2, f. 182a.

praise and the date and place of its original composition. Its parts (*maqālas*, theorems, etc.) can be added as some of our previous examples indicate. Together with the full name of the text's author polite titles can be listed. The date and place of his death, his occupation, the name of a student and specific contributions to the work can follow. The copyist may decide to provide similar data about himself, his life or his relationship to the author. In rare cases, he also might add an imprint of his seal. The few instances that we have seen come from the eighteenth century.⁴⁹

Two examples of particular interest to the long-term existence of scholarly families in the mathematical and related sciences are the following colophons. They inform us that a grandson and a great-great-grandson of Ghiyāth al-Dīn al-Kāshī (d. 1429) also were involved with the mathematical sciences. The grandson, also called Jamshīd, translated the astronomical handbook, called after Ulugh Beg to which his grandfather also contributed, from Persian into Arabic, a fact, which the copyist emphasized.

تمت رسالة الزيج المبارك وهو زيج السلطان السعيد الشهيد ألوغ بيگ ابن السلطان شاه رخ بن السلطان تیمورگورکان^{٥٠}
تعريب سيدنا ومولانا عالم العلماء أوحده الفضلا ملا غياث الدين جمشيد سبط سميّه صاحب الرصد وهو أردستاني^{٥١} من
عمل إصفهان...^{٥٢}

The great-great-grandson copied his ancestor's main mathematical textbook, the *Miftāh al-ḥisāb* (*The Key of Arithmetic*).

...قد فرغت من انتساخ هذه النسخة الشريفة ليوم الإثنين من شهر شوال سنة ٩٩٧ حرره الفقير إلى الله

عبد الرزاق بن عبد الله بن عبد الرزاق بن جمشيد بن مسعود بن جمشيد مصنف هذا الكتاب الشريف.^{٥٣}

The date of a colophon can be given in a variety of eras. The most often used era is that of Muḥammad's move from Mecca to Yathrib (Medina), the Hijra. If explicitly mentioned, the term Hijra can be specified for instance as *nabawīya*⁵⁴ (prophetic), *hilālīya*⁵⁵ and *qamarīya*⁵⁶ (lunar), *nāqīṣa*⁵⁷ (incomplete), *muqaddasa*⁵⁸ (holy),

⁴⁹ See Brentjes, *The Mathematical Sciences*, 379.

⁵⁰ The text has: كوكان

⁵¹ The text has: ادرستاني

⁵² MS Jerusalem, National Library of Israel, Ar. 417, f. 24b.

[https://www.nli.org.il/en/manuscripts/NNL_ALEPH003023209/NLI#\\$FL169277583](https://www.nli.org.il/en/manuscripts/NNL_ALEPH003023209/NLI#$FL169277583)

⁵³ MS London, British Library, Add 7470, f. 110a.

https://www.qdl.qa/en/archive/81055/vdc_100040164536.0x000001

⁵⁴ MS London, British Library, Delhi Arabic 1928, f. 129b.

https://www.qdl.qa/en/archive/81055/vdc_100066090838.0x000001

⁵⁵ MS London, British Library, Add 7472, f. 119b.

https://www.qdl.qa/en/archive/81055/vdc_100037419396.0x000001

⁵⁶ MS London, British Library, Add 23398, 65b.

⁵⁷ See, for instance, MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Ayasofya 2605, f. 228b.

*muṣṭafawīya*⁵⁹ (belonging to Muṣṭafā), *muḥammadiya*⁶⁰ (belonging to Muḥammad) or ‘*arabiya*⁶¹ (Arabic). Another era is called Jalālī,⁶² referring to the solar calendar established by ‘Umar al-Khayyām (d. c. 1023) and proclaimed by the Seljuq ruler Malik Shāh (r. 1072–1092). It appears repeatedly in later manuscripts. In many early but also in some later mathematical texts, pre-Islamic eras can appear such as the eras of Yazdigird III (r. 632–651) or Alexander of Macedon (r. 336–323 BCE). They can be provided in a group of several dates or as a single date. An example can be found in ‘Abd al-‘Alī Bīrjandī’s *Sharḥ-i Zij-i Ulugh Beg*.

تمت في شهر محرم الحرام سنة ٩٥٩. تأريخ تأليف هذا الكتاب ٩٢٩ بالسنة الهجرية، ٨٩٢ بالسنة اليزدجردية،
١٨٣٤ بالسنة الرومية، ٤٤٥ بالسنة الجلالية. تم في رجب بعون الله آفته أنا العبد عبدعلي غفر الله الأحد الرؤف له
ولوالديه بحق محمد الحسيب الأمين عليه من الصلوات أكملها ومن التحيات أفضلها. ٦٣

In late mathematical treatises, scribes also used the Gregorian calendar, calling it *masīhī* (Christian). This is mostly documented for colonial India.⁶⁴

Beyond the described composition of a colophon in mathematical or related texts, other data may be provided. Such additional information tends to be longer and idiosyncratic, i.e., it cannot be categorized. Four exceptional examples are presented in Section 8. Between the set of “normal” and “idiosyncratic” colophons stands the group of multiple or compound colophons. Multiple colophons combine older colophons either as a simple sequence of self-contained colophons one after the other or as a narrative that weaves the content of previous colophons into the form of a single colophon. We discuss examples of multiple or compound colophons in Section 6.

4. ON RELIGIOUS ELEMENTS

The most often used religious elements encompass praising God, stating that the work was done with His help, that it is He who provides success and wishes for the Prophet, his family or/and companions. Examples for these declarations can be found among those given in Section 2. A few others are presented here from one of the many copies of the so-called *Kutub al-mutawassīṭāt* (*The Middle Books*), which bring together for teaching purposes shorter geometrical and astronomical texts either translated from ancient Greek into Arabic or written in Arabic (with the rare

⁵⁸ MS Tehran, Majlis Library, 6393, f. 69a.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ MS Jerusalem, National Library of Israel, Ar. 417, f. 24b.

⁶¹ MS London, British Library, Delhi Arabic 1916, vol 2, f. 182a.

⁶² For an example see the quote annotated in the following footnote.

⁶³ MS Tehran, National Library, 2736, f. 193b.

⁶⁴ MS London, British Library, Add 14332, f. 193b.

exception of a single Persian text on spherical geometry or its Arabic translation) by scholars from the ninth, tenth or thirteenth centuries.

1. Banū Mūsā, *Kitāb fī maʿrifat misāḥat al-ashkāl al-basīṭa wa-l-kuriya*:
تم الكتاب بعون الله تعالى.⁶⁵
2. Euclid, *Phaenomena*:
تم الكتاب بعون الله تعالى و⁶⁶ توفيقه.⁶⁷
3. Thābit b. Qurra, *Lemmata*:
تم كتاب المفروضات بعون الله تعالى وحسن توفيقه.⁶⁸
4. Autolykos, *On Rising and Setting*:
آخر المقالة الثانية وتم بتامها كتاب أوطولوقوس في الطلوع والغروب. حمداً لله تعالى.⁶⁹

As is the case with any other component of a colophon, a number of further formulations can be used, and all formulations can be shorter or longer, depending on their combination or embellishment.

1. Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī, *Faʿalta fa-lā talum*:
... ونقل من نسخة سواد⁷⁰ مؤلفه طيب الله ثراه وجعل الجنة مثواه. آمين يا رب العالمين.⁷¹
2. Anonymous, *Mukhtaṣar dar ʿilm al-aṣṭurlāb*:
قطع كرديم بتوفيق باري تعالى جلت عظمته والحمد لله رب العالمين. وصلی الله على خير خلقه محمد وآله أجمعين.⁷²
3. Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, *Tahrīr al-Majīstī*:
فلنختم الكتاب. وأقول وإذ وقفتني الله تعالى أيضاً لإتمام ما قصدته وإنجاز ما وعدته فلاقطع الكلام حامداً له على آلائه ومصلياً على جميع أوليائه خصوصاً على خاتم أنبيائه والبررة من آله وأحبابه وهو حسبي وعليه توكل.⁷³

In addition to the abovementioned wishes for the Prophet, his family and his companions, the religious parts of a colophon after a mathematical text can incorporate prayers for the author, the father and less often also the grandfather of the scribe, the scribe himself, an owner of the copy, the readership, all Muslims, a ruler, a patron, the city and its inhabitants, the founder of a city or of a mentioned monu-

⁶⁵ MS Tehran, University Library, 2423, f. 151b.

⁶⁶ The scribe wrote ف.

⁶⁷ MS Tehran, University Library, 2423, f. 113a.

⁶⁸ Ibid., f. 135a.

⁶⁹ Ibid., f. 137a.

⁷⁰ Added above the line.

⁷¹ MS Tehran, Majlis Library, 3945, f. 232a.

⁷² MS Paris, BnF, Arabe 2544, f. 106a.

⁷³ MS Tehran, Sipahsālār Library, 592, f. 142b.

ment. The words of these prayers are taken, as a rule, from the Qurʾān and *ḥadīth*. They also can be appropriated from other colophons.

An important issue concerns the relationship of the used religious formulas to the religious identity of the author or the scribe. The most standard differentiation between religious affiliations among Muslim scribes is expressed, as is well known, by references to one of the four Sunni legal schools. Such references can also be regularly found in copies of mathematical and related texts. For affiliations to Shīʿī legal factions, according to our knowledge, no witnesses exist before the nineteenth century. But a more systematic search may revise this preliminary observation. Truly clear indications that allow to separate amongst Muslim denominations or between Muslims and other faith groups are, if at all present, only very rarely detectable. Slightly different is the situation regarding names of authors or translators, when they are mentioned in a later colophon. In the fifth example offered in Section 2, Thābit b. Qurra's membership in the religious community of the so-called Sabians is indicated by the *nisba* al-Ṣābiʿ.

The greatest group of colophons that might invite the speculation that a scribe was not a Muslim is that without any religious statement, in particular if they are long. But so far, only one convincing evidence could be found that ascertains such a relationship. Shāhrukh b. Iskandar Gushtāsb Kirmānī, was a Persian Zoroastrian astrologer and a scribe. He copied Abū l-Rayḥān al-Bīrūnī's (362–d. after 444/973–d. after 1053) *Kitāb al-tafhīm li-awāʾil ṣināʿat al-tanjīm* (*The Book for Understanding the Beginnings of the Art of Astrology*) claims to have worked in Mumbai from a copy belonging to the Dastūr⁷⁴ Suhrābchī, the Zoroastrian high priest of the Parsi community.⁷⁵ His colophon confirms that the traditionally good relations between Parsi communities in western India and Kirman were also well functioning during the later nineteenth century. In another colophon Shāhrukh Kirmānī reports to have transcribed books in the well-known library of Dastūr Mullā Firūz (d. 1830), which still exists today in Mumbai.⁷⁶

More specific expressions of whether a scribe or an author was considering himself primarily as a Sufi or primarily as a “conventional” scholar are provided by statements about the institutional context. An affiliation to a Sufi order is mostly suggested by the words *khānqāh* (inn, hostel, lodge etc.) and *takiya* (hospice). More often a reference to a *madrassa* is mentioned, in particular in the early modern period.⁷⁷ But not every such reference needs to signify that the scribe felt a special connection to the people who inhabited the building. An example for a topographical reference to a *khānqāh* is found in the colophon to a copy of Quṭb al-Dīn al-

⁷⁴ It is a title that is employed by Zoroastrian Parsis for priests who are superior to *mūbid*. See Soroush Soroushian, Jamshid, *Farhang-i bihdinān*, Tehran, 1335, 77. For more information, see ‘Dastūr’ in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, <https://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/dastur>

⁷⁵ MS Tehran, Majlis Library, 2131, f. 184b.

⁷⁶ MS Tehran, Majlis Library, 6338, ff. 148a, 149a.

⁷⁷ See Brentjes, *The Mathematical Sciences*, 373–394.

Shīrāzī’s work on planetary theory *al-Tuḥfa al-shāhiya fī l-hay’a* (The Royal Gift on the Configuration [of the Universe]), which some Maḥmūd (?) b. Mas‘ūd from Shīrāz produced and collated in 1356 in the neighborhood or in the garden of the Sufi convent newly built on the order of Sultan al-Malik al-Nāṣir Ibn Qalāwūn (r. intermittently 1293–1341) in Cairo.⁷⁸ The component of the name (*nisba*) al-Murshidī suggests that Maḥmūd was an affiliate, maybe a servant, of a Sufi teacher.

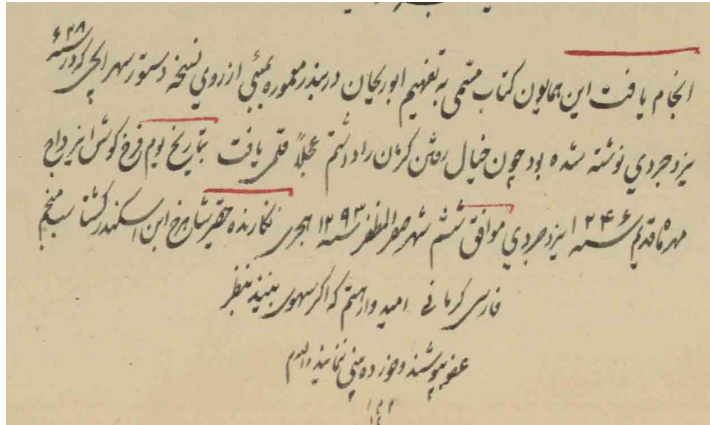


Figure 1, MS Tehran, Majlis Library, 2131, f. 184b.

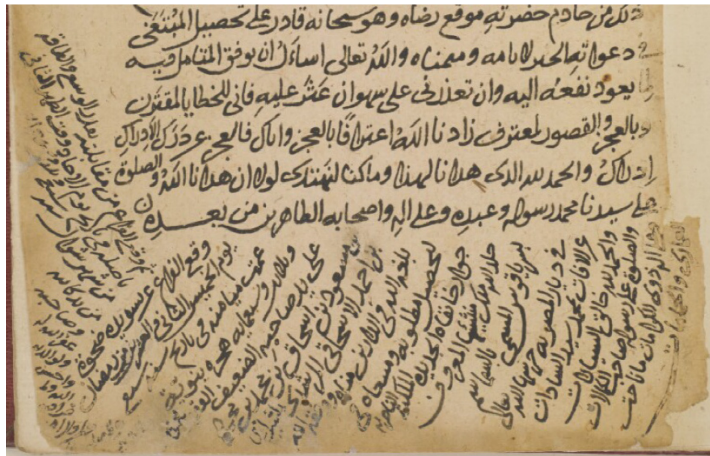


Figure 2: MS London, British Library, Add 23393, f. 177a (the colophon starts after the main text in line 14; the part referring to the lodge is placed in the lower margin)

⁷⁸ https://www.qdl.qa/en/archive/81055/vdc_100022676548.0x000001

5. SOCIO-CULTURAL INFORMATION

Colophons to mathematical and related texts are important sources for the societal spaces in which the various scholarly activities related to those texts were executed. For many times and regions, they often are the only ones available for relating the production of texts and manuscripts to some kind of sociocultural context. Activities explicitly mentioned in colophons refer to reading a text with a teacher, inviting a reader to share knowledge or correct mistakes, copying a text in order to honor an ancestor or producing the work for a patron.

A particularly valuable set of colophons reporting on some of these activities is found in copies of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ṣūfī’s (903–986) *Kitāb ṣuwar al-kawākib al-thābita* (Book on the Figures of the Fixed Stars). One such set informs us that a student of the author did not only read, copy and verify his copy with the master, but was his *mawla*. This term is rarely used for people in the astral sciences, who are, if at all labelled, more often called *ghulām*. It is possible that the latter term signified an apprentice, because its use is mostly linked to people working for instrument makers.⁷⁹ Since the first term linked a Persian court astrologer and an African student (*tilmīdh*), it might tell us that Faraj b. ‘Abd Allāh was al-Ṣūfī’s slave. On the other hand, this student must have had already significantly progressed, because he is also described as an astrologer. Thus, he may have been a manumitted slave, when he took classes with ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ṣūfī. Savage-Smith thought the term *mawla* identified Faraj as a protégé of the court astrologer.⁸⁰ Carey rendered the term as assistant.⁸¹ But before we find more information of potential social content, the meaning of terms such as *mawla* or *ghulām* for the social practices of teaching in the mathematical sciences and in particular their astral components in courtly environments will remain opaque.

A second unusual information of social importance concerns the move of one of the two copies “amongst the treasures of the Banū Buway(h) [the Buyids] until it reached al-Sahliya, the housekeeper (*qahramāna*) of the Prince of Believers [the caliph] al-Qā’im bi-Amr Allāh (d. 1075), and he [the caliph] bequeathed it as a

⁷⁹ David King, *In Synchrony with the Heavens: Studies in Astronomical Timekeeping and Instrumentation in Medieval Islamic Civilization*, vol. II, Leiden: Brill, 2005, 34; Mohammad ben Eshaq al-nadim (sic), *Ketab al-Fihrist*, edited by Reza Tajaddod, Tehran: Marvi Offset Printing, s.d., 352–353.

⁸⁰ Emilie Savage-Smith, “The Most Authoritative Copy of Abd al-Rahman al-Sufi’s Tenth-century *Guide to the Constellations*,” in *God is Beautiful; He Loves Beauty’: The Object in Islamic Art and Culture*, edited by Sheila Blair and Jonathan Bloom (New Haven: Yale UP, 2013, 125–155, 136.

⁸¹ Moya Catherine Carey, *Painting the Stars in a Century of Change. A thirteenth-century copy of al-Ṣūfī’s Treatise on the Fixed Stars, British Library Or. 5323*, London: SOAS, PhD Thesis, 2001, 31.

waqf.”⁸² This seems to suggest that women in the caliphal household had access to mathematical books, collected them and may have studied them.

تم كتاب الكواكب. تأليف أبي الحسين عبد الرحمن بن عمر بن محمد الصوفي الرازي. نقلت هذا الكتاب من نسخة كانت للوزير قوام الدين [بن] نظام الملك أبي علي الحسن بن علي بن إسحاق ووقفها وخلدها بدار الكتب التي عمرها بمدرسته في الجانب الشرقي من مدينة السلم. وهي بخط هبة الله بن بشر الشمعي. تأريخها جُمدي الأولى سنة سبع وعشرين وأربع مائة للهجرة. وقد ذكر هبة الله أنه نقلها من نسخة فرج بن عبد الله الحبشي المنجم مولى أبي الحسين الصوفي مصنف هذا الكتاب وتلميذه. وإن فرج قرأ نسخته تلك على أستاذه. وأخذ خطه فيها بالصحة. ونقلت هذا الكتاب مقلداً لهبة الله بن بشر ومحتدياً فعله في النسخ والصور وتبيين مواضع الكواكب. ووقع الفراغ من هذا الكتاب في مستهل المحرم سنة تسع عشرة ونحس مائة. كتبه لنفسه علي بن عبد الجليل بن علي بن محمد بمدينة السلم. والحمد لله وصلواته على سيدنا محمد وآله الطاهرين وسلامه. وعارضت هذا الكتاب من أوله إلى آخره في صفر من السنة المقدم ذكرها بالنسخة التي عملت لخزانة الملك عضد الدولة إبي شجاع فنا خسرو بن ركن الدولة رضي الله عنه. وهي نسخة بخط مجلس مولد من الكوفي والإصلاحات التي بها واللاحق جميعه بخط أبي الحسين الصوفي مصنف هذا الكتاب والصور جميعها صنعة أبي الحسين الصوفي بيده. وهذه النسخة تنقلت في خزائن الملوك بني بويه حتى انتهت الى السهلية قهرمانة أمير المؤمنين القائم بأمر الله فوقفها. واثبت الزمان وصححت هذا الكتاب بغاية الإجتهد وأصلحت من صوره ما أمكن إصلاحه في موضعه وما لم يكن صورته مفرداً في أوراق أضفتها إلى الكتاب بعد القصيدة. واحتذيت في عمل الصور صنعة الصوفي ورسمه. وباللّٰه التوفيق.⁸³

The copyist of the extant fragments of al-Ṣūfi’s book today in Doha, ‘Alī b. ‘Abd al-Jalīl, produced his copy in 1125 in Baghdad for his own use. A number of further activities are mentioned. The first is the information that in February 1125, ‘Alī followed the working methods of his predecessor with regard to writing, drawing and illustrating.⁸⁴ In March 1125, he collated his result with a beautiful copy written in an excellent handwriting for the treasury of the Buyid patron of al-Ṣūfi, ‘Aḡud al-Dawla, in which the author himself had drawn the constellations and added corrections. A third activity consisted in his diligent proofreading and correction of his text, including the modification of al-Ṣūfi’s drawings either within the copies of the images or on flyleaves at the end of the manuscript.⁸⁵

In addition to the activities, colophons provide information, as already pointed out in Section 3, which report about people, relationships and institutions. The social status of authors or scribes, patrons and owners of manuscripts is described through their genealogies, by-names (*nisba*), honorary names (*laqab*) or titles and positions. A so far widely ignored, but surprising information about people in the first half of the ninth century can be found in a colophon to the last books of Eu-

⁸² Savage-Smith, “The Most Authoritative Copy, 137.

⁸³ MS Doha, Museum of Islamic Art, 2.1998, f. 161b.

⁸⁴ Savage-Smith, “The Most Authoritative Copy, 136.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 137.

clid's *Elements*, presented in several variants.⁸⁶ It states that the first translator of this important ancient work al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf b. Maṭar was a *warrāq*, that is a stationer.

تمت الرسالة الثانية عشر من كتاب أوكليدس في الأصول. نقل الحجاج بن يوسف بن مطر الوراق من الترجمة الثانية.
والله حسباً كافياً ومغنياً. وصلى الله على سيدنا محمد النبي وآله الطاهرين.⁸⁷

Gründler has argued that stationers played an important role in the emergence of the religious disciplines and their codification.⁸⁸ But that some of the translators of ancient Greek texts came from the same, newly unfolding professional group has not been realized yet. That al-Ḥajjāj was not the only person involved in this spread of ancient mathematical and related knowledge, who was perceived by some copyists as a stationer, is confirmed in another colophon added to a copy of a translated astronomical text by Euclid, the *Phaenomena*. The full version of this colophon is presented in Section 6. Here only the sentence about Ḥunayn b. Isḥāq's (d. 873) stationer Abū Bakr al-Azraq is quoted.

قوبل بنسخة بخط أبي بكر الأزرق وراق حنين وعليها حواشٍ لصاعد وإصلاحات له.⁸⁹

Institutions serve as indicators of professional or topographic localization, as well as the involvement of members of the political, military or administrative elites in the maintenance and circulation of textual and visual carriers of mathematical and related knowledge. This is a highly important enrichment of our possibilities to address fundamental questions of history of science in Islamicate societies. For many decades, intellectual historians in the broadest sense and of different societies and periods have believed that the mathematical and related sciences, medicine and philosophy were marginalized after the early centuries of the Abbasid caliphate and became excluded from courtly life and the educational institutions rising under the Seljuqs and spreading with different speeds across many Islamicate societies. Colophons are a major source providing evidence against such an erroneous view. They show that the mathematical and other named sciences continued to be practiced at courts and in the educational institutions, as well as outside of them. An example of a colophon that names a teaching method is found at the end of Thābit b. Qurra's (d. 901) important text on the Roman steelyard *Kitāb al-qarastūn*. It states that he dictated his work.

هذا آخر ما أملاه أبو الحسن ثابت بن قرة في تبين أمر القرسطون.⁹⁰

⁸⁶ MS Copenhagen, Royal Library, Cod. arab. 81, ff. 174a, 189a, 201b.

⁸⁷ Ibid., f. 189a.

⁸⁸ Beatrice Gründler, "Aspects of Craft in the Arabic Book Revolution," in *Globalization of Knowledge in the Post-Antique Mediterranean, 700–1550*, edited by Sonja Brentjes and Jürgen Renn, London and New York: Routledge, 2016, 31–66.

⁸⁹ MS Leiden, University Library, 1031, f. 99b.

While not the primary space for announcements of patronage, colophons occasionally repeat elements of a dedication found in a title emblem or an introduction. In rare cases, they are the only place where such an information is provided in a copy.

The colophon below presented in the form of an extract is one such rare case. It qualifies a certain Ḥasan Efendī as a “lord and master” (*sayyid* and *mawlā*). Both terms imply a relationship; however, they do not refer to people, but to the copy. It most likely means that Ḥasan Efendī commanded the production of the copy and was its first owner.

وكان الفراغ من كتابة هذه النسخة المباركة المعطرة شذاها لسيدها ومولاهما الجنب الكريم العالي حسن أفندي باش
خليفة الرزامة...⁹¹

Colophons offer invaluable data about the geographical and to some degree social spread of the reproduction of mathematical and related treatises. They can reveal unknown trends and contradict evaluations of scholarly activities and their quality. This includes locations that are either considered as having produced no more interest in such fields of knowledge or were unknown as having had people in their midst who participated in such activities. One such example is the colophon on an excerpt of Apollonius of Perga’s *Conics*. It terminates a copy written in May 1242 in the North African city of Mahdiya.⁹² The experts for Arabic testimonies to Apollonius’ important mathematical work probably are well aware of this short extract and the working place of its scribe. But in the general picture of mathematical activities in North Africa such an engagement with a high-level mathematical topic does not occupy so far a place of honor. Colophons in other manuscripts in London and Paris, for instance, confirm that high-level astronomical texts like Ptolemy’s *Almagest* were repeatedly copied in the Maghrib during the thirteenth century.⁹³

Colophons also inform us about the active involvement of courtiers in the mathematical sciences beyond acts of patronage. As a rule, in order to be fully appreciated, they need to be read together with other parts of the text, above all the introduction or the title page, and supplementary information from historical annals, biographical dictionaries, individual notes in manuscripts and similar types of sources. A highly interesting colophon, when packed together with such supplementary material, is found in a nineteenth-century collection of four texts from

⁹⁰ MS London, British Library, IO Islamic 461, 207a.

⁹¹ MS Copenhagen, Royal Library, Cod. arab. 83, f. 126a. We thank Gottfried Hagen for identifying the administrative position of Ḥasan Efendī: deputy head of the writers of records of incomes and expenditures in a state bureau. For the Ottoman spelling of *rūznāma* with a *ḍamma* see Jehan Omran, *Wathā’iq mukhaṣṣaṣāt al-ḥaramayn al-sharifayn bi-sijillāt al-diwān al-‘ālī*, Cairo: Institut français d’archéologie orientale, 2021, 130, 133, 142.

⁹² MS London, British Library, Add 7473, ff. 164b–172b.

⁹³ MSS London, British Library, Add 7474, ff. 55b, 79b, 105b, 154b, 183b; Paris, BnF, Arabe 2482, f. 130b.

Mughal India, all four related to conic sections. This colophon, terminating the first of the four texts, reports that the Mughal courtier Ibn Qubād Beg al-Ḥārithī (d. 1705), titled Diyānat Khān, had collated his copy with the rough draft (of his translation) and its copyedited version, to use a modern expression. One needs to read the long introduction to know that Diyānat Khān talks here about his translation of parts of Christopher Clavius's Latin book on gnomonics and that he had translated them, because his father Mīrzā Qubād Beg had been interested in conic sections.⁹⁴ It is also there where the translator provides his full name as Rustam Beg al-Ḥārithī al-Badfakhshī b. Qubād Beg.⁹⁵

قد فرغ من تسويدها وتحريها بن قباد بيك الحارثي المخاطب بديانت خان.⁹⁶

The rough draft of the entire translation of Clavius's *Gnomonices libri octo* (1581) is fortunately extant in another manuscript held by the British Library.⁹⁷ A flyleaf in the manuscript by an English reader of the translation, Richard, contains the remark that the courtier had been for some time in Portugal. Perhaps it was there that he learned Latin. Rustam Beg's son Mīrzā Muḥammad also left a note in the manuscript documenting at least some interest in his father's efforts to understand Clavius's Latin text.⁹⁸ Rustam Beg's colophon, however, is brief and of the more usual kind.

تمت المقالة الثامنة وبها تم الكتاب بعون الملك الوهاب والحمد لله على ذلك والصلوة على رسوله وعلى آله وأصحابه
أجمعين.⁹⁹

Another, albeit unstable feature in particular of colophons in late copies of mathematical and related texts is the abbreviation of names and titles by something that we might call keywords. An example comes from the year 1811/2, where the scribe designates a copy of Sharaf al-Dīn al-Jaghminī's (first half thirteenth century) introductory text on planetary theory *Mulakhkhaṣ fi 'ilm al-hay'a al-basīṭa* by the *nisba* of the author.

تمت هذه النسخة الموسومة بالجمعيني وشارحها قاضي زادة الرومي.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁴ https://www.qdl.qa/en/archive/81055/vdc_100024052065.0x000001

⁹⁵ MS London, British Library, Add 14332, f. 2b.

⁹⁶ Ibid., f. 22a.

⁹⁷ MS London, British Library, IO Islamic 1308.

⁹⁸ https://www.qdl.qa/en/archive/81055/vdc_100024052065.0x000001

⁹⁹ MS London, British Library, IO Islamic 1308, f. 427a.

¹⁰⁰ MS London, British Library, Or 8415, f. 100b.

6. INFORMATION RELATED TO THE HISTORY OF A TEXT

Several colophons provide information about aspects of the history of the text, which they conclude. As the examples in Section 2 and the following colophons document, an important information concerns the people who translated ancient Greek texts into Arabic.

The first two examples offer new or little-known data about well-known scholars of the mathematical sciences and their personal involvement in the copying of mathematical and related texts, among them the abovementioned Ibn al-Sarī.

In our first example of a colophon with information about the history of the text, the copyist tells the reader first that he had copied Euclid's *Phaenomena* from a copy that had been copied from a version written by Ibn al-Sarī. Afterwards the copyist, who did not provide his own name, claims that a part of the colophon goes back to Ibn al-Sarī himself. In this second partial colophon, Ibn al-Sarī submits that he had collated his copy with the version that the abovementioned stationer of Ḥunayn b. Iṣḥāq, Abū Bakr al-Azraq, had copied. In a certain sense, this kind of compound colophon building constructs a chain of interconnected copies of a single text. It did not achieve the same taxonomic and rule-based validity like the *isnād* in the *ḥadīth* and legal sciences, but reflects a similar pursuit of reliability and authority.

تمت كتاب اوقليدس في الظاهرات ترجمه، لابي الحسن علي بن يحيى، عيسى بن يحيى تلميذ حنين بن إسحاق. والحمد لله رب العالمين. نسخت هذه النسخة من نسخة انتسخ من الأصل بخط إمام الأجل الأوحى نجم الدين أبي الفتح أحمد بن محمد بن السريّ برد الله مضجعه مصححةً بتصحيحه وفي آخره مكتوب بخطه: قوبل بنسخة بخط أبي بكر الأزرق وراق حنين وعليها حواشٍ لصاعد وإصلاحاتٌ له. وصلى الله على نبيه محمد وآله أجمعين. ١٠٢

The second and third examples consist of two specimens each. The first two are copies of al-Qazwīnī's geographical work *Āthār al-bilād wa-akhbār al-ibād* (*Monuments of the Lands and Historical Traditions about Their Peoples*) and his more famous universal history of creation *ʿAjā'ib al-makhlūqāt fī gharā'ib al-mawjūdāt* (*The Wonders of Created [Beings] on the Rareties of Existing [Things]*). Both copies come from the early fourteenth century some 50 years after al-Qazwīnī's death. In both of them the copyist claims that he had worked from al-Qazwīnī's holographs. In the case of the geography, the scribe was Muḥammad ibn Mas'ūd ibn Muḥammad al-Hamadhānī. He finished his copy "late in the day on Friday 27 Dhū al-Qa'dah 729/22 September 1329."¹⁰³ The holograph was completed in Dhū al-Hijja

¹⁰¹ The text has: ابو

¹⁰² MS Leiden, University Library, 1031, f. 99b.

¹⁰³ MS London, British Library, Or 3623, f. 173a.

674/May-June 1276. The scribe of the cosmography abstained from providing his name or any date.¹⁰⁴

The two specimens of the third example are early fourteenth-century copies of Suhrāb's work on mathematical geography *'Ajā'ib al-aqālim al-sab'a* (*The Wonders of the Seven Climes*). They are dated 15 Rabi' I 709/23 August 1309 and 23 Ramaḍān 711/2 February 1312.¹⁰⁵ The scribe of the first copy did not enter his name into the colophon nor the place of his work. The scribe of the second copy was much more forthcoming. He copied the text in Baghdad for his own usage, was an astrolabe maker and was called Maḥmūd ibn al-Muhadhdhī (?) ibn Shawka.¹⁰⁶ Nonetheless, both copies are interrelated, because both of them transmit very specific information, which misled modern students of one of them to assume that the text had been composed by Ibn Sarābiyūn (ninth century).¹⁰⁷ This specific information concerns the claim that both scribes copied Suhrāb's text from the copy of a correct version in the hand of the Syriac bishop Ibn Bahlūl (tenth century). As we will argue below this is not fully correct. Both scribes had rather worked with two different *Vorlagen*. This means that the entire first part until the respective date of each copy is a reproduction of an older colophon.

نقلت من نسخة نقلت من نسخة صحيحة ذكر ابن الوراق أنها بخط ابن البهلول الذي أصلح كتاب ابن سراييون. وقول بها نسخة أخرى فكانت فيها زيادة وهي المواضع التي يذكر فيها حدود البلدان وقد كتبها بعد هذا الموضوع. وكتب في منتصف ربيع الأول من سنة تسع وسبعمئة الهلالية. والحمد لله رب العالمين وصلوته على سيدنا محمد النبي وآله الطاهرين وصحبه وسلامه¹⁰⁸.

نقلت من نسخة نقلت من نسخة صحيحة ذكر ابن الوراق أنها بخط [إ]بن البهلول الذي أصلح كتاب ابن سراييون. وقول بها نسخة أخرى فكانت فيها زيادة وهي المواضع التي يذكر [في]ها حدود البلدان وقد كتبها بعد هذا الموضوع. وكتب محمود بن المهدي بن شوكة الأسطرلابي البغدادي بمدينة السلام لنفسه تعليقاً ووقع الفراغ في يوم الأربعاء ثالث عشرين رمضان من سنة أحد عشر وسبعمئة والحمد لله كما ١٠٩ هو أهله ومستحقه وصلى الله على سيدنا محمد المصطفى خاتم النبيين وعلى آله وعترته الطاهرين وسلم تسليماً كثيراً إلى يوم الدين¹¹⁰.

The differences between the two colophons indicate that their scribes copied different *Vorlagen*. The unknown scribe of the slightly older copy forgot to include the

¹⁰⁴ MS London, British Library, Or 14140, f. 135b.

¹⁰⁵ MSS London, British Library, Add 23379 and Or 10975.

¹⁰⁶ https://www.qdl.qa/en/archive/81055/vdc_100027678232.0x000001

¹⁰⁷ https://www.qdl.qa/en/archive/81055/vdc_100027677075.0x000001

¹⁰⁸ MS London, British Library, Add 23379, f. 67b.

https://www.qdl.qa/en/archive/81055/vdc_100027677075.0x000001

¹⁰⁹ The text has: هما.

¹¹⁰ MS London, British Library, Or 10975, f. 63a.

https://www.qdl.qa/en/archive/81055/vdc_100027678232.0x000001

title of Ibn Sarābiyūn's work, which Maḥmūd ibn al-Muhadhdhī (?) ibn Shawka copied four years later. The unknown scribe's information that his *Vorlage* contained at the end an addition from another work called *Ḥudūd al-buldān* (*Limits of the countries*) supports the view that the two scribes had worked with two different *Vorlagen*. Moreover, it emphasizes the fact, often overlooked, that scholarly copyists did not merely copy a text but engaged with it in a scholarly manner. One way of doing it was to read in parallel another work on the same or very similar subject matter and appropriate information from it, which they added at some place to the text they copied. But the author of the copied colophon did more. He went to read some Ibn Warrāq's note on Bar Bahlūl's copy of the *Kunnāsh*. The assumption that this Ibn Warrāq might be Ibn al-Nadīm's (d. 990) is not confirmed by the extant text of his *Kitāb al-Fihrist* (*The Catalog*), which does not contain an entry on Suhrāb or Bar Bahlūl, and the entry on Ibn Sarābiyūn does not refer to Bar Bahlūl.¹¹¹ The earlier entry on books with information about countries provides only titles, but no author names.¹¹²

Our fourth example for the inclusion of the history of the copied text into a colophon comes from copies of 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ṣūfi's book on the fixed stars some of which we already introduced in Section 5. Among the parts that the copyist 'Alī b. 'Abd al-Jalīl included in his colophon is a report about the text's history derived from Hibat Allāh b. Bishr al-Shamī's colophon written in 1036. This report includes the information that Hibat Allāh's version had been owned by the vizier Qiwām al-Dīn, a son of Niẓām al-Mulk, who had donated the manuscript as a *waqf* to the library of his madrasa. This is one of the earliest statements in a mathematical manuscript that connects the patronage of the mathematical sciences with a madrasa, a library and a religious donation of scientific manuscript. Since 'Alī states that he copied precisely this version, he obviously had access to the library of Qiwām al-Dīn's madrasa without apparently having been attached to it. This points to some kind of public access to the library's most precious manuscripts. In a later passage of the colophon, 'Alī briefly elucidates the history of the beautiful patronage copy reporting about its movements through the Buyid treasuries and its final arrival as a *waqf* in the possession of al-Sahliya, the head of the female household of the Abbasid caliph, which we discussed in Section 5.

This particular compound colophon solidifies the previously made evaluation that the decision to include such information into a colophon served to increase the copyist's trustworthiness. Due to the number and their more diverse temporal and regional background the colophons from those copies also testify to the spread of this kind of information across a greater part of the Islamic world and to its importance to copyists.

¹¹¹ *Ketab al-Fihrist*, 354.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 109.

A second, very similar compound colophon is transmitted in MS Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Berlin, Landberg 71. It is partially damaged. It also begins with announcing that ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ṣūfī composed the book. This statement is followed by a string of religious formulas. According to Carey, the anonymous copyist then reports that he collated his writing and the tables in Mosul with a copy that had been made in Dhū l-Qa‘da 404h (November 1014) from a copy in the handwriting of Faraj b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Ḥabashī, the *mawla* of Abū l-Ḥusayn al-Ṣūfī.¹¹³ In this copy, the drawings and the tables had been made by al-Ṣūfī. The copy in the handwriting of Faraj al-Ḥabashī was given as a *waqf* to the *Dār al-‘ilm* between the two walls in the City of Peace (Baghdad). Then follows an incomplete sentence giving only the statement “in Dhū l-Qa‘da 630h (August 1233)”.¹¹⁴ Carey’s date, however, is a silent correction of the date actually given in the manuscript, which is 454h (November 1062). Although the Indian numbers used for the date clearly read 454, i.e. 1062, this date is wrong, because according to Carey the *Dār al-‘ilm bi-bayna sūrayn* had been burned down in 1059 during a series of political, military and denominational conflicts in Baghdad.¹¹⁵ Thus Carey’s correction to 1014 might be acceptable if not for the fact that this date is placed after the name of al-Ṣūfī.¹¹⁶ Hence, for this colophon, 404h cannot be an acceptable correction of the scribal mistake. But another version of a colophon derived from the same ancestor colophon as the one discussed here indicates that the original colophon contained additional statements between al-Ṣūfī’s name and the date 404h, as we will show below. This additional information allows to accept the date 404h, although not for the copy in the hand of Faraj with the tables and constellations in the hand of his teacher, but for the copy placed at the *Dār al-‘ilm bi-bayna l-surayn* in that year.

Scribal mistakes such as the just discussed date imply that this colophon was copied together with the entire text extant today in Berlin. Despite its mistakes, this second colophon is important, since it confirms that Faraj al-Ḥabashī had been al-Ṣūfī’s *mawla* and had produced a copy of al-Ṣūfī’s book, (a copy of) which was considered worthy of being given as a religious donation to a library. In addition, it claims that the drawing and the tables in the copy made by Faraj were entered by the teacher himself. This agrees with an information provided in the colophons in the copy held by the Museum of Islamic Art in Doha discussed above. Furthermore, the colophon we are discussing here is important, because it identifies the receiving library as a well-known institution that collected and received scientific manuscripts. Its founder was the Zaydī vizier Abū Naṣr Shāpūr b. Ardashīr (d. 1025) of the Buyid ruler Bahā’ al-Dawla (r. 981/2–1012/3).¹¹⁷ Moreover, the claim that a predecessor of the copy extant today in Berlin had been given as a *waqf* to this li-

¹¹³ Carey, *Painting the Stars*, 31.

¹¹⁴ MS Berlin, Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Staatsbibliothek, Landberg 71, f. 93a.

¹¹⁵ Carey, *Painting the Stars*, 30.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 31.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 29.

brary underscores that collecting scientific manuscripts and making them available through the religious institution of *waqf* had spread in the eleventh century beyond the caliphal court. It also highlights that astral knowledge and its illustrated representation in a manuscript was appreciated and promoted by courtiers coming from different Muslim denominations.

A very similar colophon with the same impossible date of Dhū l-Qa‘da 404h/November 1014 for a copy in the handwriting of the Ethiopian astrologer Faraj b. ‘Abd Allāh, while the tables and drawings had been made by ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ṣūfī, is found in the abovementioned copy made for Ḥasan Efendi in Cairo in 1602. It also agrees with the colophon in MS Landberg 71 with regard to the library, where this ancient manuscript was stored and its naming as *Dār al-‘ilm bi-bayna al-sūrayn*.¹¹⁸ The colophon in this manuscript today in Copenhagen makes, however, clear that its scribe had had no direct access to this precious copy. He copied the colophon as part of a longer colophon in an earlier manuscript with the same information. At least two copies and possibly more separated him from the manuscript copied in Baghdad. This is stated in the sentences before the part just summarized according to which an intermediary copy had been made from a copy of this alleged ancient manuscript by a Jewish copyist called Yūsuf b. Yaḥya b. Yūsuf b. Danyāl b. Sulaymān b. Ya‘qūb b. ‘Alī b. al-Ḥasan b. ‘Ankab b. Rawīm b. Smūl b. ‘Ādiyā for himself.¹¹⁹ In the copy of this colophon the date 404h is not written in Indian numerals and does not follow the name of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ṣūfī, but is clearly separated from it by a new sentence. Hence, it is possible that this date belongs to a further intermediary copy as suggested above. If so, the manuscript donated as a *waqf* to the *Dār al-‘ilm bi-bayna l-sūrayn* was not the exemplar written by Faraj b. ‘Abd Allāh with the tables and drawings entered by ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ṣūfī.

Carey already pointed to all those colophons, including a very brief reference to the *Dār al-‘ilm bi-bayna l-sūrayn* as the place, where the scribe found the *aṣl* (*Vorlage*) he copied.¹²⁰ This reference is part of an explanation about the stars of the constellation of the Southern Fish as found on the globe and in the sky. In this note, the library is called *Dār al-‘ilm bayna l-sūrayn*.¹²¹ This suggests that the scribe did not know the colophons we have discussed. While the scribe may have well seen the copy of Faraj b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Ḥabashī, his note does not say so. Hence, the note does not contribute to a further clarification of the meaning of the date 404h.

This exploration of similar but contradictory colophons implies a further hypothesis: colophons are rich sources of information, which need to be verified and

¹¹⁸ MS Copenhagen, Royal Library, Cod. arab. 83, f. 127a.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Carey, *Painting the Stars*, 31.

¹²¹ MS London, British Library, Or 5323, f. 85a.

contextualized as other types of texts to avoid misunderstandings and misinterpretations.

7. ON FORMAL CONFIGURATIONS AND PLACEMENTS

In mathematical and related texts, we found six types of formal configurations and placements. There are two types that we most often encountered. The first simply continues where the main text ended and fills the line or lines, depending on its length. The colophon in Figure 2 fills the half line after the main text ends. It is separated from it by what looks like a whorl, probably representing an *n*, the first letter of the word *nihāya* (end).

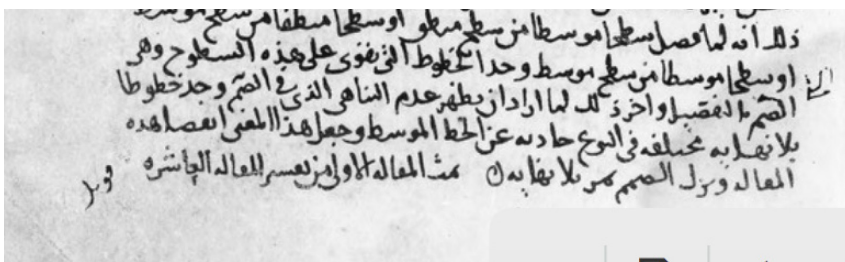


Figure 3: MS Paris, BnF, Arabe 2457, f. 31a.

As the next example shows, a colophon can also be surrounded by the diagrams referring to the main text.

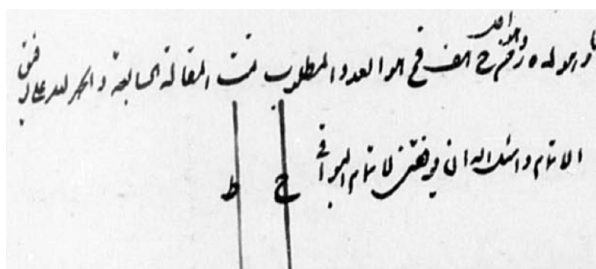


Figure 4: MS Tehran, University Library, 2286, p. 133.

The second type of configuration may or may not continue the main text in one line. But then it successively forms a triangle or a funnel whose vertex is the end of the colophon. In the following example from Laranda the first word of the colophon *tammāt* (completed) fills the last line of the main text. Then the colophon continues building the described form.

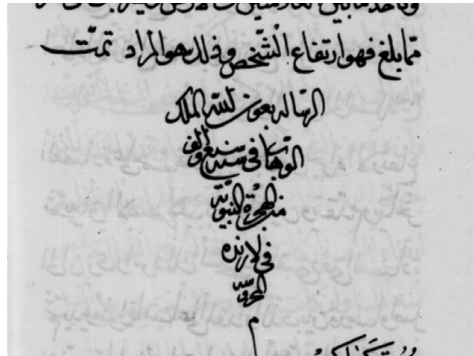


Figure 5: MS Paris, BnF, Arabe 2544, f. 26b.

Further markers can be added to these two basic configurations. They include dots arranged as a triangle, two strokes or forms looking like inverted commas, flowers with three or more petals and other decorative symbols. They enclose the individual lines of the colophon.

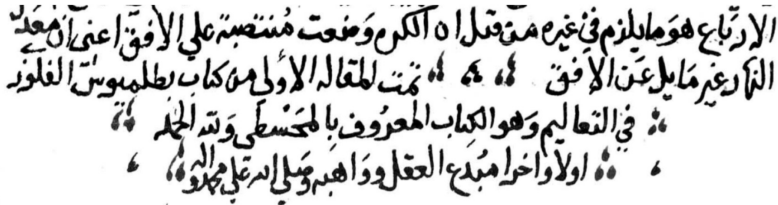


Figure 6. MS Paris, BnF, Arabe 2483, f. 12a.

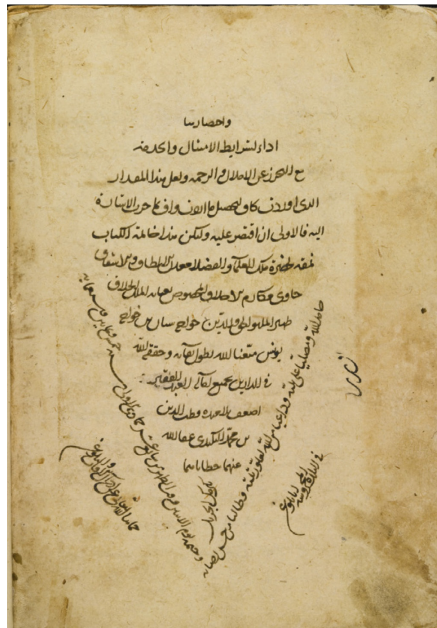


Figure 7. A colophon in a copy of Sharaf al-Din al-Jaghmini's *Mulakhkhas*. Sotheby's, April 2012, lot 24.

These two basic forms of colophons also vary in their placement. In addition to following immediately the main text, they can occur separately from it below a diagram or below a table.¹²²

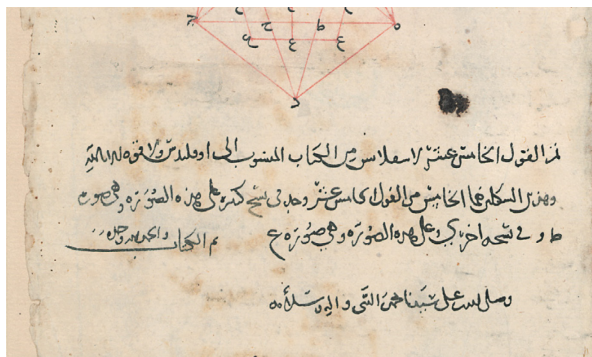


Figure 8. MS Tehran, University Library, 3586, f. 476a.

A new phenomenon in manuscripts with texts on the mathematical and related sciences is the appearance of a pictorial identity between a title page presenting the name of an author and the title of his work and a colophon to the same work. One such example so far known to us uses the funnel configuration and is thus included here. The colophon carries the date of 16 Ramaḍān 1031/25 July 1622.¹²³ The work is the descriptive geography *Kharīdat al-‘ajā‘ib wa-farīdat al-gharā‘ib* (*The Perfect Pearl of Wonders and the Precious Pearl of Extraordinary Things*) attributed to Sirāj al-Dīn Ibn al-Wardī (d. 1457). The pictorial agreement between the title page and the ending colophon expresses a belief in the existence of a connection between the two types of paratexts and their equivalent relevance for the presentation and meaning of a text.



Figure 9. MS Copenhagen, Royal Library, Cod. Arab. 93, f. 213 a.

¹²² An example of this kind can be found in MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Ayasofya 2692, f. 165a.

¹²³ <http://www5.kb.dk/manus/ortsam/2009/okt/orientalia/object59528/en/#kbOSD-0> = page:429



Figure 10. MS Copenhagen, Royal Library, Cod. Arab. 93, f. 1a.

The other four forms occur less often in mathematical or related texts. They include rectangular, hexagonal or circular configurations, the set up in form of two columns of verse and the outside framing of a triangular ending of the main text by a line on each side of the triangle, mostly providing the date and the place of the scribe. Triangular colophons can also be accompanied by two such lines of words and numbers as their frame.

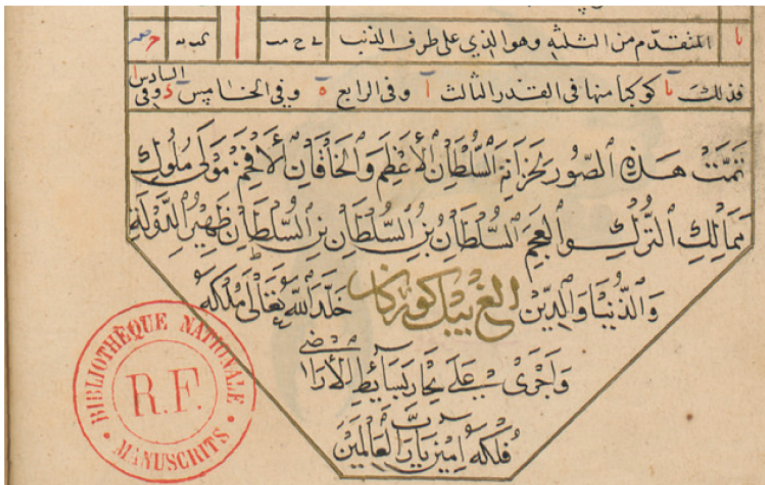


Figure 11: MS Paris, BnF, Arabe 5036, f. 247b.

Further possible locations where to find a full or partial colophon are the space of the textual layout freed by the triangular format of the colophon or the traditional margin outside the standard layout. In such instances, the colophon mostly comes from another copy and often refers to an older variant of the text copied in the manuscript. Due to the widespread custom, characteristic for Arabic, Persian and Turkic texts, of copying everything found on the pages of a *Vorlage*, it is not always clear whether pieces of colophons placed in such a manner were added by the scribe who copied the text extant in the studied manuscript or whether he had already found them in the previous exemplar. Thus, it is not easy to trace and pinpoint movements of colophons across texts, times and localities.

Additional presentational elements used for configuring a colophon are size, color and calligraphy. Usually, these three elements agree with those employed in the main text at its end. But sometimes, two or more calligraphic styles, sizes or colors can be encountered. An example of a colophon, which uses a different calligraphy than applied in the table and two colors, is shown in Figure 11. Some scribes also marked the beginning of their colophons by the standard horizontal stroke in some kind of red color used in mathematical and related texts to indicate the beginning of a new textual unit.

In addition to completed texts, colophons are occasionally found after a note called *fāʿida* (benefit), a literary format that apparently emerged in the mathematical sciences in about the thirteenth century. It gained impact in about the fifteenth century through the collection of notes over several folios within a manuscript or separately bound together. Such a collection perhaps could be called *notebook*. We know, however, of no investigation of this kind of material and can therefore not judge, whether it should be primarily seen as a random assemblage of short passages of text or whether at least in some cases a group of notes shows some kind of structure. An example is the following *fāʿida*, which combines two colophons. Moreover, the second scribe Muḥammad Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad Yūsuf al-Ṭāliqānī, who wrote the entire manuscript including the note in 1057h/1647, loved rhyming within a prose text. In the first line *al-khaliqa* rhymes with *al-haqiqa* and in the second *al-jānī* with *al-Ṭāliqānī*.

تمت بعونه وحسن توفيقه حامداً لله تعالى ومصلياً على نبيه محمد وآله أجمعين. كتبه أقل الخليفة بل لا شيء في الحقيقة
العبد الجاني الجاني ابن محمد يوسف، محمد حسين الطالقاني في سنة ١٠٥٧ غزى الهجرية. وانسخت هذا الخطاب من
أول الكتاب إلى [آخره من] النسخة القديمة التي تأريخها [أ] هكذا: كتبه على بن محمد بن علي الصفار تيممة يوم الأحد
التاسع من شهر ربيع الأول سنة تسع وتسعين وأربعمائة الهجرية. والحمد لله حق حمده والصلوة على نبيه محمد المصطفى
وآله الطاهرين حسبنا الله ونعم الوكيل وما توفيقني إلا بالله. تمت بعونه. ١٢٤

A further rare feature of this colophon is its reversal of the standard order of multiple colophons, where the oldest comes first and the youngest is the last. This is the

¹²⁴ MS Tehran, University Library, 1328, f. 38a.

procedure that al-Ṭāliqānī also followed at the beginning of the manuscript as the following example documents.

تمت الكتاب. والحمد لله ولي محمد وأهله. وتاريخ المنتسخ هكذا: فرغ من تحريره مسعود بن محمد بن علي بن حمزة يوم الثلاثاء الرابع من شهر ربيع الأول سنة تسع وتسعين وأربعمائة هجرية. وكانه العبد الجاني محمد حسين بن محمد يوسف الطالقاني. ووقفت بكتابته واختتامه في شهر شوال سنة سبع وخمسين بعد ألف الهجرية. ١٢٥

But in the colophon attached to the *fā'ida*, al-Ṭāliqānī built a short narrative of his three activities of completing the copy, of writing it in 1057 and of copying from an older copy. It is only in the last step of this report, when he desires to date this old version, that he quotes not merely its date, but most of the older colophon. Such a use of an older colophon, independent of its place in the sequence of colophons, is in itself a rare phenomenon in mathematical and related texts. In the previous example, al-Ṭāliqānī also employed an older colophon in the function of a dating tool. Thus, his peculiar usage of an older colophon is independent of whether he wished to narrate his activities or to present a temporal sequence from the older to the younger dates.

Finally, the mistakes in the colophon at the end of the *fā'ida* imply that the colophon may not be the original colophon of the named scribe, but rather a copy by a later, unnamed scribe. This highlights the general difficulty to ascertain whether a colophon as a whole is a copy or whether only some of its parts may be a copy.

8. EXCEPTIONAL COLOPHONS

In Sections 3 to 6 of this paper, we categorized and discussed sets of information that can be customarily found in the colophons of the mathematical and related texts. In addition, we indicated that according to our present state of knowledge arising out of our relatively limited survey of colophons, no standard structure can be identified for the colophons. Therefore, it is not astonishing to see the scribes incorporating unusual or unusually detailed information in the colophons. Four such exceptional colophons will be described in the following examples.

Example 1: Ṭūsi's *Tahrīr al-majīstī*

The scribe, Muḥammad Samī' b. Muḥammad Shafī',¹²⁶ noted that he completed the transcription in a certain observatory called *Sa'd-numāy* (The Mirror of Sa'd) in the

¹²⁵ Ibid., f. 25b.

¹²⁶ Muḥammad Shafī' b. Muḥammad Šāliḥ, the father of the scribe, was a famous religious scholar in Safavid Iran. His seal which can be found in a great number of scientific manuscripts reads as al-Mudhnib Muḥammad Shafī' 1079. This date might point to the establishment of his library within the observatory.

city of Yazd. Historical annals do not mention this observatory or institution that was probably linked to some kind of astronomical activities.

وقع الفراغ من نسخه في الرصد المبارك الملقب بسعدنماي ببلدة يزد على يدي أضعف عباد الله وأحوجهم إلى رحمته
 ابن محمدشفيح، محمدسميع في يوم الأحد التاسع والعشرين من شهر ربيع الثاني لسنة تسع وسبعين بعد الألف من
 هجرة. ١٢٧

Example 2: A nineteenth-century collection of mathematical texts

The manuscript consists of five Arabic and Persian mathematical treatises, one copied in Cairo, one in Shimiranat, a county adjacent to the north of Tehran, and the others in Tehran. The copyist was Asadallāh al-Munajjim al-Hizār-Jarībī who was the court astrologer of Muẓaffar al-Dīn Mīrzā while he was the governor of Tabriz.¹²⁸ Every treatise has its own colophon. Regardless of the language of the main texts, all the colophons are in Persian except for the one written in Cairo which is in Arabic. The earliest colophon has a date of 2 Muḥarram 1310h (1892) and the latest is dated at 14 Rabīʿ al-awwal 1310. It is notable that the scribe found the colophons an appropriate place to document the cholera outbreak in Iran and Tehran and his own infection first with that disease and then with malaria. The following information can be extracted from one of the colophons (f. 49b):

1. The outbreak of cholera began on the fifth of Muḥarram 1310h from the Sarchishmih district in Tehran, contiguous to the Majlis Library where this manuscript is now preserved.
2. The disease was transmitted to all districts of Tehran until the end of the very Muḥarram.
3. People fled Tehran to wherever they could.
4. The scribe resided in Shimīrānāt but cholera had spread there too. Only those residents of Shimīrānāt who could not move to other places had remained in the city.
5. The mortality caused by the disease was so high that the survivors were not able to bury the corps of their loved ones according to the religious rituals (viz. carrying them on a coffin ...).
6. 26 days after the full outbreak in Tehran and neighbouring cities, the disease markedly subsided.
7. Finally, the scribe claims to have written about the history of the outbreak of cholera in Tehran in detail in a booklet.

¹²⁷ MS Tehran, Sipahsālār Library, 530, f. 121b.

¹²⁸ Muḥammad-Ḥasan Khān Iʿtimād al-Saltāna, *Chūhīl sāl tārikh-i Īrān dar dawriyi pādishāhiy-i Nāsir al-Dīn Shāh: al-Maʾāthir wa-l-āthār*, edited by Iraj Afshar, vol. 1, Tehran 1362 (1983), 299.

... حمد خداوند را که از تسوید این اوراق و استنساخ آن موفق شدم در حالی که سیل بلا اعنی مرض وبا در تمام روی زمین احاطه نموده، خاصه ایران، سیما طهران، که از پنجم محرم الحرام این مرض ظاهر [شد] اولاً در سرچشمه و بعد از آن تا آخر محرم به جمیع محلات سرایت نمود. مردم مانند جراد منتشر در گوشه و کنار فراری [بودند]. با اینکه در شمیرانات هم سرایت نموده آنان که قدرت حرکت نداشته در شهر مانده و مانند برگ خزان مردم را ریخت به نوعی که هر کس مرده خود را به روی تخته پاره و در روی الاغ حمل به نهانخانه [می کرد و] کسی نبود که زیر تابوت برود و یا تابوت حمل نماید. در چنین حالتی شروع به استکباب و استنساخ این نسخه نموده و در شب بیست و ششم صفر که ناخوشی وبا به کلی از این ولایت (شمیرانات) و اطراف تخفیف حاصل نموده این نسخه به اتمام رسید. تاریخ مفصل وبا را در جایی دیگر به طور کتایچه مسطور داشتم و انا العبد اسد الله منجم هزارجریبی فی سنة ۱۳۱۰ ۱۲۹

Example 3: Kūshyār ibn Labbān's *Zij al-jāmi*^c

Those who have been dealing with Arabic mathematical manuscripts can certainly confirm how easy it is to encounter fragments that are not written or copied correctly in terms of the grammatical rules of the Arabic language. The following colophon is an exception, because the scribe specified to have spotted a number of grammatical errors in an autograph of *Zij al-jāmi*^c. These errors reflect the fact that the author used the masculine form of a verb for a feminine word or vice versa and the singular of a word or verb for word in the plural or dual. The *nisba* of the scribe, al-Tikrītī, suggests that he might have been a native Arabic speaker. Thus, he might have felt obliged to correct Kūshyār's errors. However, he also asserts to have faithfully followed the author in copying the book even if he considered it faulty.

کتب هذه النسخة من نسخة بخط المصنف السعيد كوشيار بن لبان بن باشهرى الجليلي كرم الله محله وتحرى نقلها على ما هي عليه حتى إنه وافقه في بعض المواضع على تذكير المؤنث وتأنيث المذكر وتوحيد الجمع والتثنية محافظة لنسخ الأصل بعينه ليكون ذلك أوكد في النقل صاعد بن يحيى بن الفضل بن عبد الله بن جرير التكريتي المهندس لنفسه وذلك في العشر الأول من جمدي الآخرة سنة ست وستين وخمس مائة وكان المصنف رضي الله عنه فرغ من كتب نسخته بسهرج يوم الأحد الثاني من بهمن ماه سنة ثلاث وتسعين وثلثمائة فارسية والحمد لله. ۱۳۰

Example 4: 'Alī al-Sharafi's colophons

A fourth type of extraordinary colophons concerns their location at other places than the usual end of a text. One such deviation from the norm combines features of a title page with the final page. A particularly outstanding set of examples appears in the two atlases of the Mediterranean (155; 1571) and the large rectangular

¹²⁹ MS Tehran, Majlis Library, 6092, ff. 5b, 9b, 22b, 49b, 64b.

¹³⁰ MS Alexandria, Bibliotheca Alexandrina, 4285, f. 73b (in Arabic).

world map (1579) made by ‘Alī al-Sharafi (d. after 1592). ‘Alī’s atlases are well known among historians of map making. Images of his charts and maps can be found on the Internet. His world map from 1579 has drawn much less attention so far. In the numerous studies of the atlases, his modes of self-representation, which include his colophon-type texts, have not been seriously investigated yet. ‘Alī employs several strategies of self-representation that vary between the three objects and clearly reflect the different atmosphere in the two cities in which he produced them – Sfax (1551) and Qayrawan (1571). Where the world map was produced is unknown. The atlas of 1551 is produced with much more costly materials and focuses on sea chart of the Mediterranean and the Black Sea. These charts are embedded between mostly verbal tables of the setting of the lunar mansions, the noon and afternoon prayer times and a calendar with agricultural information and thunder prognostications. As a kind of visual introduction, a world map and a *qibla* chart follow after the first table on the setting of the lunar mansions preceding the sea charts. Religious references are stronger in the visual elements and the format than in the textual parts. In contrast, the atlas of 1571 works with cheaper materials, is much more explicitly religious, appeals to other networks and includes further visual representations of similar additional themes. The world uses a combination of features from the two atlases.

Beyond this adaptability to local conditions, which only we can discover in hindsight, al-Sharafi represents himself in the textual parts as following in the steps of the masters of geography, map making, astral knowledge, Maliki law, *ḥadīth* and *taṣawwuf*, which he does not merely copy but adapts to his own purposes. He also shows him familiar with poetical parlance expressing critique at the Hafsid rulers. Visually, he shows himself as well skilled in different kinds of calligraphy, ornamental decoration used in Maghribi manuscripts, above all in Qur’āns, patterns of local and Mudejar ceramic art and architectural and other representations in Ottoman Turkish forms. His colophons underline his versatility, humbleness and participation in intellectual and professional chains of knowledge and mapmaking. In the atlases he uses colophon-style texts on the title page and at the end of the atlas. In difference to title pages in Arabic or other Islamic manuscripts, he fills half of the entire cover page of the atlas of 1551 with information about himself and his work in a bold epigraphic style known from mosques and gates in Sfax. The other half of the page was once covered by a semicircular image which a reader cut out and stole. The two parts are embedded in a decorative frame with garlands of knot patterns and what seems to be Sūfi symbols. This kind of configuration is neither known from Christian atlases nor from Islamic illustrated manuscripts. Nor do Christian atlases present their makers on the title page in a representative style. Their names usually appear on a later page in one of the margins. Thus, al-Sharafi seems to have chosen both the unusual place and its rich formatting of his colophon on the title page of the atlas of 1551 as one of the numerous minor novel features of his work.

لا إله إلا الله ومحمد رسول الله ﴿حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ﴾ الحمد لله والصلاة والسلام دائماً على سيدنا محمد رسول الله.

هذه الطبلّة من عمل العبد الفقير إلى الله الغنيّ به عن من سواه عليّ بن أحمد بن محمّد الشرفيّ الصفاقسيّ. وفقه الله. ووقع الفراغ منها في يوم الثلاثاء [ء] فاتح شهر رمضان المعظمّ عام ثمانية وخمسين وتسعمائة. ١٣١

Starting with the *Fātiḥa* as if it were a prayer, the praise of God and the Prophet follows suit, which most often terminates a colophon or parts of it. Then the designation of the kind of work that is presented, i.e. *ṭabla*, and the name of its maker are given combining here elements of a manuscript title page with a production inscription on an instrument. The colophon ends with information about when the maker had finished his atlas, which is – in particular with its choice of words – not a regular part of a manuscript title page in Islamicate book culture.

The atlas ends with a table on the agricultural activities per month of the solar year, following the Gregorian calendar. This table closes with a brief colophon after which another brief colophon terminates the atlas as a whole.

إنّتهى ما ذكر في الفصول ممّا يُزرع ويُحصّد وغير ذلك ممّا ذكر فيها. والله سبحانه أعلم بغيبه وهو ﴿حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ وَنَعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ﴾.

إنّها ما في هذه الطبلّة من تنزيل بي وغيره على حسب الاستطاعة كما وجدت. والله سبحانه المُستعان. ١٣٢

Three features of the two brief colophons are remarkable. The first is their brevity in comparison to the colophon on the title page. In particular the final colophon has lost standard elements of a colophon in favor of the text on the title page. The second feature is the connecting bridge between the colophon given below the table and the beginning of the atlas after the title page. This bridge is provided the quotation of the same Quranic phrase. Its formally more appropriate place is the end of the atlas as a whole. Perhaps, the final colophon is an addition that al-Sharafi introduced, while the previous colophon was the final statement in a source he worked with. The third feature concerns the colophons calligraphy. It coincides with the calligraphy al-Sharafi chose for the title page, the super- and subscription in the frame of the *qibla* chart and the heading of the calendar table.

9. CONCLUSIONS

The exploration of almost 400 manuscripts containing complete or partial copies of mathematical and related treatises shows a broad variety of organizational forms of colophons and their contents. As indicated in the second section, no clear trends can be recognized. It rather seems that the design of a colophon was in the hands of the individual scribe. The observed peculiarities of individual colophons confirm this impression not merely for the variability of the standard types of information incorporated into colophons, but also for the readiness of some copyist or authors

¹³¹ MS Paris, BnF, Arabe 2278, f. 1b.

¹³² Ibid., f. 8a.

to transgress such ordinary frames and make use of the opportunities that colophons offer for acts of self-representation and therewith for authorship in novel ways. Expectations of at least some forms of standardization depending on institutional contexts such as *madrasas*, *zāwiyas* or courtly workshops could not be confirmed in a clear manner. This does not mean that a systematic exploration of thousands of texts could not yield other results. Nonetheless, institutions play some role in the shaping of colophons of mathematical and related text, because schools are mentioned in general or specific terms as do sessions of a joint reading of texts or listening to read out texts. The information of having copied a specific text for personal usage remains present, but seems to have been considered of minor relevance. Important aspects of colophons for a localized and at times even somewhat contextualized history of the mathematical sciences in Islamic societies are references to cities, towns, villages, fortresses, palaces or private houses, as well as dates of copying. Both help to gain deeper insights into the mobility of texts, scholars, students, collectors or copyists and therewith into the attention that different classes of texts, their methods and authors received over the centuries, regions, social groups and languages.

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TRANSLATION AND IDENTITY IN SIXTEENTH-CENTURY TUNISIA: COLOPHONS IN THE WORKS OF ‘ALĪ B. AḤMAD B. MUḤAMMAD AL-SHARAFĪ FROM SFAX

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This article offers a general overview of the cultural translation processes carried out by the 16th century Tunisian author ‘Alī al-Sharafī (d. ca. 1592?), born in Sfax and settled in Qayrawan. We will focus on the colophons of his three preserved works – two atlases and a world map – through which our author developed his identity and constructed his authority. To achieve that we have relied mainly on the point of view of translation and policies of translation studies, art history and Mediterranean studies. These disciplines have developed new challenging approaches that have redefined both cartography and the concept of space within translation.

1. INTRODUCTION¹

This work was developed within a research project² which proposed to study the Mediterranean nautical cartography in Arabic and Ottoman Turkish during the sixteenth century from new perspectives, mainly methods from transcultural and translinguistic translation studies. This approach offered the opportunity to liberate

¹ This work is a result of the project “Mediterranean Nautical Cartography in Arabic and Ottoman Turkish: Islands or Gateways of Knowledge in the Sea of Transcultural and Translinguistic Translation Processes?” (2018–2022), sponsored by the DFG (German Science Foundation, reference number P.S.WissNAUT). It was part of the cluster project SPP 2130 headed by Regina Töpfer, Peter Burschel and Jörg Wesche.

² See footnote 1. I thank Sonja Brentjes, the director of this project, for her valuable corrections, suggestions and advice provided during the composition of this paper.

the study of the small Arabic corpus of manuscript maps and nautical charts from the isolation that they have suffered within the larger field of the history of Mediterranean nautical map making.³ It helped to overcome their general treatment as simple specimens of mirror image translations, which identifies them mainly as inferior cultural products, as simple copies or imitations of European charts and atlases. Taking this as a starting point, Brentjes and Herrera Casais⁴ proposed to study these artefacts as complex products resulting from complicated and intertwined processes of cultural translation that transcend the horizon of a mere bilingual relationship. Both looked beyond conventional understandings of translation, that is, translation as a source-to-target language transfer. They state that in their production the mapmakers carried out creative combinations, reconfigurations, and innovative integrations of materials originally composed in a variety of natural languages. Many factors – social, cultural, political, linguistic and extralinguistic – were involved. In addition, scholars as Harley, Italiano, Vidal Claramonte and Simon,⁵ who have included the spatial dimension into translation studies, consider cartography as translation, a complex process of cultural negotiation. Among the new concepts proposed, we have relied mainly on transmediation, known also as intersemiotic translation,⁶ that is, a cultural process between different medias. In our case, transmediation occurred mainly through the transfer of geographical knowledge and cartographic practices from different sources and traditions into the format of a portolan atlas and world maps. This cultural concept, through which maps and atlases – not only Arabic ones – should be understood, has been applied below in the analysis of the colophons of the three extant works of ‘Alī b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Sharafī.

Until recently, he has been considered an unskilled chart maker who simply copied two European atlases produced in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in the Mediterranean. His sources were mainly seen in Majorcan and Italian exemplars.⁷ Contrary to this trivialization, our analyses have revealed a multifaceted persona rooted in his political and cultural contexts, aware of the artistic and literary innovations of his time, and linked to the two main Tunisian social environments: the Sufi milieu of the widespread institution known as *zāwiya-s*, and the circles of the religious and legal scholars. The information provided by a number of

³ See Soucek 1992; Kahlaoui 2018, pp. 207–240.

⁴ See Brentjes 2008; Brentjes 2012; Brentjes 2015; Herrera Casais 2008.

⁵ See Italiano 2016, pp. 37–40; Simon 2012; Vidal Claramonte 2012; Harley 2001.

⁶ In the last years this translation concept, also known as transmutation, transposition or transformation, has been reformulated by several authors. The most interesting approaches are those of Italiano and Parlog. Italiano and Emström –drawing from Jakobson– have reformulated the concept into the notion of transmediation. See Stockhammer 2007, p. 68; Italiano 2016, pp. 11–12, 36–38; Parlog 2019, pp. 15–23.

⁷ See Kahlaoui 2018, pp. 224–227, 229–233; Ledger 2016, pp. 273–274, 278–280, 291, 300, 311–312.

biographical, hagiographical, religious, calendrical, astronomical and other scholarly Arabic sources enriched our knowledge about ‘Alī al-Sharafī, as well as his contemporaneous and later relatives, placing them at the beginning of the 17th century, among preachers, legal scholars, notaries and trustful witnesses.⁸ However, many things about ‘Alī’s family and ancestors continue to remain unknown. Although traditionally considered as a family of Andalusī origin – from the Sevillian town of *Sharaf* (Aljarafe) –, this cannot be proven. We only know that some people with the patronymic al-Sharafī were in Tunis since the end of the 13th century and connected to Sufi circles and legal scholars.⁹ In relation to ‘Alī’s close family, his father, Aḥmad, and grandfather, Muḥammad, we are certain that they were also mapmakers and craftsmen, as it was claimed by ‘Alī in his atlas of 1571 and the world map of 1579. They compiled treatises and tables of prayer times and the direction of the *qibla*.¹⁰ ‘Alī states that he received some astronomical training from his father and used the atlases and portolan charts composed by his father and grandfather and inspired by Majorcan portolan exemplars,¹¹ among his own sources. Hence, four generations of the same family were involved in cartographical production and translation processes: the grandfather (Muḥammad), the father (Aḥmad), the son (‘Alī) and the grandson (Muḥammad) who composed, at least, one large, rectangular world map based on his father’s model.¹² This identifies mapmaking as a family craft, transmitted from one generation to another, and bringing together multiple skills and forms of knowledge as was the case for atlas and chart makers elsewhere along the Mediterranean.¹³ In the case of ‘Alī, he practiced his craft for at least almost thirty years (1551–1579).¹⁴ This demonstrates that his work as a craftsman and cultural translator was important to him. As his texts – in this case, the colophons – testify his work allowed him to express how he wished to be seen by his contemporaries and to position himself in the society of his day. He wanted to be considered as a trained and educated author capable of creating good-looking products and representing himself as a true authority.

Before the exposition of al-Sharafī’s colophons, a brief introduction of the three works is required. Firstly, it must be said that the three works are conceptual-

⁸ See Ibn ‘Azzūm 2004, vol. 1, p. 269, vol. 4, pp. 246–248, vol. 6, pp. 338–339, vol. 7, pp. 5–7, 111; Ibn Abī Liḥya 1998, pp. 402–404.

⁹ See Amri 2013, pp. 75, 85; al-Sakhāwī 1992, vol. 6, pp. 328–329.

¹⁰ That is, the direction of the *Ka‘ba* in Mecca.

¹¹ See MS Oxford, Bodleian Library, Marsh 294, fols. 12r, 13r.

¹² It is preserved in Paris, BnF, GE C-5089 (RES).

¹³ On artisans and workshops in Western Mediterranean, see Burri and Ouerfelli 2018; in Ottoman Turkish and Eastern societies see Farooqi 2005; Farooqi 2015. On cartographic workshops see Astengo 2007, pp. 206–236; Campbell 1986, pp. 429–434.

¹⁴ His earliest extant work is the atlas of 1551 preserved in the French National Library (Arabe 2278) and the latest is the world map of 1579 preserved in the Italian National Central Library, in Rome.

ly, visually, materially and textually different from each other. Despite the fact that they share the same narrative threads and a certain number of pictorial and calligraphic elements, constituting what can be called a *Sharafian* style, each of them is unique. This is clearly reflected in the colophons. The three works were composed with different purposes and cultural strategies, and at a different time in the life of the author. Thus, the political and personal events were different, as well as some of the sources that al-Sharafī had access to. Furthermore, the three works were the result of different cultural processes including innovation, experimentation, and preservation.

The oldest extant work is the atlas of 1551¹⁵ preserved in the French National Library (Arabe 2278). It is possibly one of his first works as chart maker. Its eight cardboard folios (250 x 200 mm) were composed in the maritime city of Sfax, as the ornamentally embellished colophon placed on the opening page states (fol. 1v). It shows a luxurious execution with vivid and intense colors, well-executed decorative calligraphic forms, symbols and knot frames. These features mirror the local culture of Sfax and its environment, especially the epigraphical inscriptions engraved on the main buildings and tombstones of Sfax.¹⁶ With regard to its textual material, the most differentiating feature of this atlas, in comparison to the other two extant works, is the agricultural, medical and dietetic calendar contained in the two last tables (fols. 7v–8r). They show a clear connection to Andalusī calendrical material stemming from the work of the Cordovan author ‘Arīb b. Sa‘d (d. ca. 980), called *Kitāb al-anwā’*.¹⁷

The second work is the atlas of 1571. ‘Alī composed it in one of the main North African religious and *Māliki* centers: Qayrawan. The atlas reflects Qayrawan’s austere character as a Sufi center. It is currently kept in the Bodleian Library of Oxford University (MS Marsh 294).¹⁸ This atlas (275 x 205 mm, thirteen folios, paper for the texts and cardboard for the charts), is remarkably different from the first atlas, despite the fact that they present the same *Sharifian* narrative. Al-Sharafī continued working with the most important of his earlier sources, such as the works of the Maghribī al-Idrīsī (d. ca. 1165) and the Egyptian Ibn al-‘Aṭṭār (d. ca. 1470). Moreover, during this period he may have received training in one of the Sufi *zāwiya*-s of the city,¹⁹ and had access to unknown written sources not mentioned by him before. These works left a significant presence in the atlas – textually and conceptually – and conditioned his new and innovative conception of an atlas as a scholarly product that now incorporates in its structure new tables, schemes

¹⁵ It is available online: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8422954w>

¹⁶ The embellished calligraphic style appears in its opening and closing pages (fols. 1v, 8r) and in some headings (fols. 2v, 7v).

¹⁷ For a first overview in the analysis of this first atlas see de Castro and Tiburcio 2021.

¹⁸ It is available online: <https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/objects/19589637-02a0-44cb-b55a-9ccf28e356bc/surfaces/d6eac491-55af-4891-84f0-30d97cb0fcb/>

¹⁹ See Ibn Nāji 1968–93, vol. 4, pp. 112–113, 128, 171, 227–228, 236; Amri 2008.

and explanatory texts with instructional character.²⁰ These modifications indicate that ‘Alī follows the tradition of the small treatises on *mīqāt* and related disciplines that he consulted (such as those composed by Ibn al-Bannā’). In comparison to the first atlas, al-Sharafi increased the complexity of his production processes as well as his authorial strategies. Besides the first and last colophon – executed in the larger calligraphic version of the standard Maghribi book hand of the main text –, he included at the end of each thematic section, secondary colophons through which he added new layers to his identity²¹ and promoted himself in a stronger manner as an author and authority.

Finally, the third work, preserved²² in the National Central Library of Rome, is a fascinating rectangular world map composed in Qayrawan, in 1579, and produced on two parchment sheets glued together. This big world map (135 x 59 cm) is an important document of ‘Alī al-Sharafi’s and his family’s engagement in translating texts into images. He claims²³ to have produced three other world maps of this kind. Unfortunately, they are lost and we cannot know whether those other maps were circular, as the small circular world maps included in the two atlases,²⁴ or rectangular as this one. Twenty years later, ‘Alī’s son, Muḥammad, produced a second extant rectangular world map that clearly reflects, in content and format, the style of ‘Alī’s map.²⁵

This world map, oriented southwards, is undoubtedly the most complex and mature work, technically and conceptually, produced by ‘Alī. He created it through numerous acts of visual and written translation. On two joint sheets of parchment, al-Sharafi combined, adapted and at times fused two main different geographical and cartographic traditions: the tradition of sea charts produced in many cities along the Mediterranean littoral and the Islamic and Arabic geographical and mapmaking traditions as embodied in the mentioned al-Idrīsi’s works. Besides its powerful visual configuration (knot frames, wind roses, geographical features, ornamental calligraphy, vivid colors, etc.) al-Sharafi played in a thoughtful manner with the different texts he inscribed unto the seas and lands. Of great interest for the colophons is the concept of “block texts”. “Block texts” are textual pieces gen-

²⁰ They are mainly the works of Ibn al-Bannā’ (d. 1321), Abu Miqra’ (fl. ca. 1300), al-Saqifi (?), al-Jaghminī (13th century) or al-Hamadānī (d. ca. 903).

²¹ Al-Sharafi focused in these secondary colophons on his Sufi facet through the inclusion of multiple invocations and terminology proper of Sufi circles, and to present himself as a humble author and a servant of God.

²² On this world map see Nallino 1944; Kahlaoui 2018, pp. 323–324.

²³ See MS Oxford, Bodleian Library, Marsh 294, fol. 3r.

²⁴ See MS Paris, BnF, Arabe 2278, fol. 3r, MS Oxford, Bodleian Library, Marsh 294, fol. 5v.

²⁵ Both maps are unique and different products. They show cultural and technical differences that can be explained, mainly, due to the different world experienced by Muḥammad twenty years after his father. The world map (137 x 48, 5 cm) is preserved in Paris, BnF, GE C-5089 (RES).

erally framed, ascribed to the old tradition of early Majorcan and Italian portolan charts (14th century).²⁶ Considering conceptually the world map as a single sheet with a western and eastern part interconnected, al-Sharafi readapted this block text pattern and converted it into a double colophon structure. The content of the two inscriptions was placed face to face on the eastern and western sides of the world map mirroring each other.

2. TEXTS

2.1. Atlas of 1551

(fol. 1v)

لا إله إلا الله ومحمد رسول الله ﴿حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ﴾ الحمد لله والصلاة والسلام الدائم على سيدنا محمد رسول الله. هذه الطلبة من عمل العبد الفقير إلى الله الغني به عن من سواه علي بن أحمد بن محمد الشرفي الصفاقسي، وفقه الله، ووقع الفراغ منها في يوم الثلاثاء [ء] فاتح شهر رمضان المعظم عام ثمانية وخمسين وتسعمائة. ﴿لِلَّهِ الْعِزَّةُ وَلِرَسُولِهِ﴾²⁷ ﴿نَصْرٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَفَتْحٌ قَرِيبٌ﴾

2.2. Atlas of 1571

(fol. 1r)

الحمد لله وصلى الله على سيدنا ومولانا محمد رسول الله. هذه الطلبة من عمل العبد الفقير إلى رحمة مولاه الراغب منه عفوه ورضاه الطالب من ربه اللطف الخفي: علي بن أحمد الشرفي الصفاقسي منشأ ومولداً القروي²⁸ قراراً ومسكاً المالكي مذهباً، جعله الله من أهل العلم العاملين به وعامله بفضلهم وعموم رحمته. ووقع الفراغ منها بتاريخ أواخر جمادى الأخرى من عام تسعة وسبعين وتسعمائة مصلياً ومسلياً على سيدنا محمد وآله وراغباً من ناظر وسامع الدعاء بالمغفرة والرحمة والرضوان له ولوالديه وجميع المسلمين.

(fol. 3r, secondary colophon)

وذلك كله على حسب الاستطاعة لأن العبد لا يخلو من هفوة وهفوات أو زلة أو زلات أو ذهول أو نسيان أو غير ذلك مما طبع عليه جبلة الإنس فاستغفر الله في جميع ذلك استغفار عبد معترف بذنبه لربه راغب منه ستر عيبه ومغفرة ذنبه. وأسأل من طالع شيئاً من عملنا أن ينظر فيه بحيث الإنصاف والإقتصار على ما ذكر من الأوصاف ويدعو للجميع بالعمو والغفران والرحمة والرضوان لنا ولوالدينا وجميع المسلمين. وصلى الله على سيدنا محمد خاتم النبيين وآله وصحبه أجمعين.

(fol. 12v, secondary colophon)

²⁶ See Pujades 2007, pp. 225–232.

²⁷ The folio is damaged in this place. له has been supplied.

²⁸ The classical form is: *al-Qayrawānī*, القيرواني.

وهذا سبب زيادة القول هنا بإطتاب وتبين حد الاستطاعة لأجل قصر الباع. فأرغب من الناظر والسَّماع القبول مع الإنصاف والله أسأل أن يغفر للجميع بفضلِهِ ويعمّننا بشمولٍ منه وطوله بجاه سيدنا محمد وآله.

(fol 13r, final colophon)

قال كاتب الأُحرف وصانع هذه الطَبلة، وَفَقَهُ اللهُ تَعَالَى إلى الخيرات والطاعات وكان له ومعه في كلِّ الأُمور والحالات: ما في هذه الورقات والتي قبلها مما يتعلّق بصفة الأرضِ وأبحرِها وطولها نقلته بعضُهُ من كتاب تَزَهة المشتاق في اختراق الآفاق وبعضُهُ من ابن العطار أيضاً. وأمّا ما يتعلّق بالأفلاك ومثلها فن الجعيميّ في بعض رسائله في علم الهيئة وتركتُ كلامه على الأقاليم السبعة وما تضمّنته من بلاد وجبال لأجل الإختصار وما العبد فيه من شغل البال في الأسفار؛ فن أراد ذلك فليطالعهُ فإنّه عجيب. وأمّا عمل البلاد والمراصي في البحر والأوراق المكتوب فيها البر الذي مبدؤه من زقاق سبته إلى الشام وير بحر الكفا فإنّي نقلته من طَبلة رأيتها بخطّ بعض السّاكنين باصطنبول وهو الحكيم أبو العباس أحمد الأندلسي القاطن بها؛ وهي غير الطَبلة التي أعرّف [ها] من شغل الوالد والجِدِّ، رحمهما اللهُ تَعَالَى، وذلك لأنّها الموجودة عندي حين عملي لهذه. فأطلب من طالعتها ونظرها وتأمّل منها أن ينظر فيها بعين الإنصاف فما وجد فيها من خللٍ أصلحه أو من نقصٍ كملّه؛ لأنّ العبد موصوف بالنقص لا الكمال متّصف بالتعيب بسوء الأعمال معترف لربه بذنبه طالب منه مغفرته في الماضي والاستقبال. (وم) ²⁹سوى ذلك من الأوراق نقلت شرحها بالمعنى على قدر تقصيري وقصر باعِي؛ فإنّ القَطْ ينتفخ حتى تغيب الأسود وعند غيبة التّر قد يستعظم الجارود. فبالله ثمّ بالله. أسأل من أبصر خطّي هذا ونظره أن يدعولي بالعفو والرضوان والرحمة والمغفرة ثمّ له ولوالدينا ولنن كسبها وطالعتها ونظرها وجميع المسلمين أجمعين. والصلاة والسلام على سيدنا محمد خاتم النبيّين وعلى أصحابه من بعده أجمعين. وآخر دعوانا أن الحمد لله ربّ العالمين.

2.3. World map of 1579

(Western side, colophon next to the neck of the parchment)

الحمد لله ، هذا البحر الغربيّ من بحر الظلمات وخرج منه ، من الزقاق، البحر الشاميّ الذي أوله من زقاق سبته و الغرب ³⁰؟ إلى الشام و لذلك سميّ بالبحر الشاميّ. طوله من ابتدائه إلى حيث انتهائه الف فرسخ و مائة و ستة و ثلاثون فرسخاً و هي ثمانية أميال و أربعمائة ميل و ثلاثة آلاف ميل، لأنّ الفرسخ ثلاثة أميال، و ذكر بطليموس أنّ في هذا البحر الغربيّ سبعة و عشرين الف جزيرة بين خالية و عامرة. و يتصل هذا البحر بالبحر الشماليّ و البحر الجنوبيّ و يتصلان بالبحر الشرقيّ و ينهى الجميع بالبحر المحيط و إليه الإشارة بقول الله تَعَالَى: ﴿وَ الْبَحْرُ مِيْدُهُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ سَبْعَةُ أَبْحُرٍ﴾ ³¹. و يتشعب من البحر الشاميّ بحر نيّطس، و هو المسمّى بحر الكفا و طوله من إصطنبول إلى انتهائه الف ميل و مائة و قيل مائتان. و يتشعب منه أيضاً خليج البندقية و طوله الف ميل و مائة ميل. وهذا يختلف باختلاف الكليص و أمياله. قال كاتب الأُحرف و صانع هذه الطَبلة، ذكر هذا صاحب تزهة المشتاق في اختراق الآفاق، و

²⁹ Here is a hole in the manuscript.

³⁰ This word is difficult to read in the map. See Nallino's interpretation (1944, p. 535): "...il mare Siro, che comincia allo Stretto di Ceuta e dell'occidente [e va] fino alla Siria."

³¹ Qurʾān, surah XXXI, Luqmān, 26.

كاتب هذه الأخراف و صانعها العبد الفقير إلى الله علي بن أحمد بن محمد الشرفي الصفاقسي منشأً، القيرواني حين التاريخ مسكناً، المالكي مذهباً يجعله الله من أهل العلم العاملين برحمته ٣٢ و كرمه، و وقع الفراع منها أوائل جمادى الأولى من عام سبعة وثمانين و تسعمائة - غفر الله له و لوالديه و لمن طالعها و كسبها و دعا للجمع بالمغفرة و الرحمة و الرضوان، انتهى.

(Eastern side, mirrored colophon)

الحمد لله، هذا البحر الشرقي المسمى بالبحر الزفقي المتصل بالبحر الشمالي و البحر الجنوبي المتصلين بالبحر الغربي، و يسمى الجميع بالبحر المحيط، و هذا البحر الشرقي خلفه من جهة غربيه بلاد ياجوج و ماجوج، و سمي هذا البحر الزفقي لنتن ريحها لأن ماءه متنن ولا يستطيع أحد السفر فيه لنتنه و فساد لحاصه ٣٣، و قيل إن به عوضاً على قدر الجرافة؟^{٣٤} الواحدة منها و تشقى من ألتاطت / لاطت^{٣٥} به بالعص و القرص إلى أن يموت. وهو عميق جداً و لذلك لم يستطع أحد أن يذكر ما فيه من الجزر أو غيرها كما ذكر في غيره، و حكى بعض الناقلين في حكمة الله أنه يهبج مراراً بروائح منتنة جداً يموت بها من ياجوج و ماجوج خلق كثير لا يحصى لهم عدد. و روى ابن عباس، رضي الله عنه، أن مسيرة الدنيا خمسمائة عام، منها مائتان بحار و مثلها قفار و مسيرة ثمانين لياجوج و ماجوج و ثمانية عشر للسودان و قيل تسعة^{٣٦} و عامان للبيض و قيل عام واحد. قال كاتب الأخراف و ناقل هذه الجغرافيا علي بن أحمد الشرفي، لطف الله به، ذكر الحديث الذي رواه ابن عباس في مسيرة الدنيا، الشيخ ابن عباد في شرحه على المرشدة وغيره من العلماء [ء] في كتبهم، رضي الله عنهم أجمعين. نقلت هذه الجغرافيا من أخرى بخط جددي محمد، رحمه الله - و نقل بر البحر الشامي و مراسيه من كتابص من عمل أهل ميورقة، دمرها الله - و معنى الجغرافيا على ما حكاه في كتاب زهة المشتاق صفة الأرض فذكر فيه صفة و المعمور منها و الخالي لشدة حر كالسودان و برد كبلاد الروسية و غيرهم من أهل الأقليم السابع، فمن أراد ذلك فليطالع الكائين المذكورين في أولهما، والله سبحانه أعلم وهو الموقف الصواب. وأما بحر الخزر و جرجان و [الديلم فإنه]^{٣٧} مفرد لا يتصل بشيء من الأبحر المذكورة و فيه جزر... و بلاد كثيرة فيها خلق كثير و فيه من العجائب [لا توجد]^{٣٨} في الأبحر المذكورة فيما ذكر ذلك صاحب الكتاب المذكور.

3. TRANSLATIONS

3.1. Atlas of 1551

(fol. 1v)

³² This word is unclear in the manuscript. We follow Kahlaoui's interpretation. See Kahlaoui 2018, p. 323.

³³ This word is not clear in the map. Nallino translated it as "air". See Nallino 1944, p. 537.

³⁴ It is difficult to read the Arabic text here. Nallino (1944, p. 537) translated as "...it is said that in it there are mosquitoes the size of a shovel each one of them".

³⁵ It is difficult to read this sentence. We offer two possible variants.

³⁶ It is difficult to read this word in the map.

³⁷ Here the map is deteriorated.

³⁸ We follow Nallino's interpretation. See Nallino 1944, p. 539.

There is no god except God and Muḥammad is His Messenger. ﴿God suffices us and [He is] the best Disposer of affairs³⁹﴾. Praise be to God, and eternal blessing and peace be upon our Master Muḥammad, His Messenger. This atlas (*tabla*) was made by the servant (of God) who is in need of Him and cannot dispense with Him, ‘Alī b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Sharafi al-Ṣafāqūsī (of Sfax) — may God grant him success. It was finished on Tuesday the first day of the glorious month of *Ramaḍān* of the year 958 (2nd September 1551). ﴿Victory from God and an imminent conquest⁴⁰﴾. ﴿Power belongs to God and to His messenger⁴¹﴾.

3.2. Atlas of 1571

(fol. 1r, main colophon)

Praise be to God, and may God bless our Master and Patron Muḥammad, His Messenger. This atlas (*tabla*) was made by the servant [of God] who is in need of his Protector’s compassion, and beseeches his forgiveness and contentment and implores to his Lord the concealed favour: ‘Alī b. Aḥmad al-Sharafi, al-Ṣafāqūsī (of Sfax) of origin and birth, al-Qarawānī (of Kairouan) of settlement and residence, al-Mālikī of [religious and legal] doctrine; may God place him among the wise men who look for his knowledge, and may He treat him with His grace and infinite mercy. It was finished at the end of *Jumādā al-ukhrā* of the year 979 (before November 27, 1571), praying and blessing our Master Muḥammad and his family and begging whoever beholds [it] and listens [to someone reading it] to supplicate [God’s] forgiveness, compassion and approval for him, his parents and all Muslims.

(fol 3r, secondary colophon)

All this was done to the best of [my] ability because the servant [of God] is not free from errors, slips, stupor, obliviousness and other [mistakes] to which human nature is prone to. We ask God to forgive all these [failures] in a servant who admits his faults to his Lord and implores Him to cover his defects and pardon his sins. I ask whoever observes anything of our work to examine it fairly and be pleased with the limited descriptions that are offered. [I also ask] that he supplicates [God’s] remission and forgiveness for all [people] and [God’s] compassion and approval for us, our parents and all Muslims. May God’s blessing be granted to our Master Muḥammad, the Seal of the Prophets, and to His family and all His companions.

³⁹ *Qur’ān*, surah III, verse 173.

⁴⁰ *Qur’ān*, surah LXI, verse 13. The complete verse says: “And [you will obtain] another [favor] that you love – victory from Allah and an imminent conquest; and give good tidings to the believers”.

⁴¹ *Qur’ān*, surah LXIII, verse 8. The complete verse says: “The power belongs to God, to His messenger and to the believers; but hypocrites do not know it”.

(fol. 12v, secondary colophon)

This is the reason for adding the exposition here as an explanation and clarification to the limit of [my] capability, because of the lack of [my] faculties. I beg whoever beholds [this atlas] and listens to [someone reading it] to accept [it] with fairness, and I implore God to forgive all [people] with His grace and to cover us with His protection and might by the honour of our Master Muḥammad and his family.

(fol. 13r, final colophon)

The writer of these lines and maker of this atlas, may God the Highest grant him good and pious deeds, and may He be for him and with him in all matters and conditions, says: what is in these pages and the previous ones related to the description of the Earth, its seas and their lengths, I have translated part of it from the book *Nuzhat al-mushtāq fī ikhtirāq al-āfāq*, and part also from [the book of] Ibn al-ʿAṭṭār. As to what concerns the spheres and the like, [I have translated it] from one of al-Jaghminī's *risāla-s* on *ʿilm al-hayʿa*, though I have left out what he said about the seven climates and their countries and mountains, for the sake of brevity and [because God's] servant is [more] concerned with travel reports. Whoever wants [to learn more about] this shall read it because it is marvellous. As to the work on the countries and sea ports, in addition to the pages on which the land that begins in the Straits of Ceuta till [it ends in] Syria, as well as the land of the Sea of Kafā (Black Sea) are listed, I have translated it from an atlas (*tabla*) that I saw and was made by a resident of Istanbul, the learned Abū al-ʿAbbās Aḥmad al-Andalusī, an inhabitant there. [This atlas] is different from the atlas that I know and that was composed by my father and grandfather, may God the Highest have mercy on them. [I used it] because that [atlas] was the one that I had with me, while I was making this of mine. I beg whoever reads, looks at and examines [my atlas] to treat it with fairness and to correct or complete whatever he finds deficient or defective, because [God's] servant is defined to be defective and not perfect, and is described by [his] faultiness for [his] wrong deeds. He admits his sins to his Lord and implores His forgiveness for the past and the future. As for the other pages, I have translated the main concepts that are exposed [on them] to the extent that my limited capacities [have allowed me]. Certainly, the cats boast when the lions are gone and, in the absence of the tigers, the locusts feel mighty. To God, I swear to God, and I ask whoever observes and looks at this [work] written by me to supplicate [God's] remission, approval, compassion and forgiveness for me, himself, for our parents, for whoever acquired, read and looked at it, and for all Muslims. May [God's] blessing and peace be granted to our Master Muḥammad, the Seal of the Prophets, and to all his companions who followed him. Our last prayer is praise be to God, the Lord of the Worlds.

3.3. World Map of 1579

(Main colophon, Western side, next to the neck of the parchment)

Praise be to God, from this Western Sea of the Sea of Darkness, the Syrian Sea branches out from the Strait [of Gibraltar]. It begins in the Strait of Ceuta till [it reaches] Syria, and for that [reason] it is called the Syrian Sea. Its length, from its beginning to its end, is 1136 parasangs, which are 3408 miles, because a parasang (*farsakh*) is three miles. Ptolemy mentioned that in this Western Sea there are 27000 islands, between empty and inhabited. This Sea is linked to the North Sea and the South Sea and both are linked to the East Sea. Everything ends in the Surrounding Sea to which God, the Highest, referred with His words: ﴿ [If all the trees on earth were pens and] the sea [was ink], refilled by seven other seas, [the words of Allah would not be exhausted] ⁴²﴾. And from the Syrian Sea the Sea of *Niṭus* branches out, and is called [also] the Sea of *Kafā* (Black Sea). Its length from Istanbul to [where] it ends is 1100 miles, [but] it is said 1200. The Gulf of Venice (Adriatic Sea) also branches off it, and its length is 1100 miles. And this varies [according to] the different nautical maps (*kanābiṣ*)⁴³ and the [different] miles. The writer of these lines and the maker of this chart (*tabla*) says that this was mentioned by the author of *Nuzhat al-mushtāq fī iḥtirāq al-āfāq*. And the writer and maker of [this chart] is the servant of God who is in need of him, ‘Alī b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Sharafī al-Ṣafāqusī (of Sfax) by birth, al-Qayrawānī (of Qayrawan) by residence at the time of the date [of composition], and Mālikī by legal doctrine. May God make him part of the wise men who looks for His mercy and generosity. [This chart] was finished at the beginning of the month of *Jumādā* I of the year 987 (end of June 1579). May God forgive him, his parents and whoever reads and acquires [this map], and begs for all [people] the forgiveness, the mercy and the complacency [of God], end.

(Eastern side, mirrored block text)

Praise be to God, this Eastern Sea, called the Tarry Sea, is linked to the North Sea and the South Sea, and both are linked to the East Sea, and everything is called the Surrounding Sea. Behind this Eastern Sea, on its western side, are the territories of Gog and Magog. This sea is called tarry due to the pestilence of its air and because its waters are fetid and nobody is able to travel through it because of its pestilence and its rotten air. It is said that in it there are mosquitoes [the size] of a shovel, each one of them, and they make suffer the one whom they reaches, either biting him or stinging him, until he dies. [This sea is] very deep and therefore nobody is able to say how many islands are in it, as well as other things that are known for other seas. Some of those who have transmitted the wisdom of God said that [in this sea] sometimes very putrid winds blow. That is why an uncountable number of

⁴² *Qurʾān*, surah XXXI, verse 26. We have quoted the entire verse to make the text comprehensible.

⁴³ The singular is *kunbāṣ*, an Arabic transliteration of the Italian *compasso*.

people from Gog and Magog have died. Ibn ‘Abbās⁴⁴ said – may God be satisfied with him – that the length (*masīra*) of the Earth is five hundred years: two hundred for the seas, the same for the deserts, eighty years the length of [the territories of] Gog and Magog, eighteen for [the territories of the] blacks, but it is said nineteen, and two for [the territories of the] whites, but it is said that it is only one [year]. The author of these lines and the translator of this map (*jughrāfiyā*),⁴⁵ ‘Alī b. Aḥmad al-Sharafī – may God be kind to him- said: [this] tradition (*ḥadīth*), which transmitted Ibn ‘Abbās in relation to the length of the Earth, was mentioned [also] by the Sheikh Ibn ‘Abbād in his commentary on [the work] *al-Murshīda*,⁴⁶ as well as by many other scholars in their respective books, God be satisfied with all of them. I translated this map (*jughrāfiyā*) from another one composed by my grandfather Muḥammad – may God have mercy on him – who [in turn] translated the outline of the Syrian Sea and its ports from a portolan chart (*kunbāṣ*) composed by the people of Mallorca – may God destroy it. The meaning of the [word] *jughrāfiyā*, according to what is said in the book *Nuzhat al-mushtāq*, is that of “the description of the Earth”. In [this book] the Earth is [in] described and its inhabited parts and its parts [that are] empty, because of the intense heat, as in *al-Sūdān*, or because of the [intense] cold as in the territories of Russia and in other [territories placed] in the seventh climate. Whoever wants to [know] this [has to] consult the Introduction of the two mentioned books. And God, praise be, is the Wisest and the only one who helps to achieve the right path. As for the Sea of *al-Khazar*, *Jurjān* and [*al-Daylam*] (Caspian Sea) it is isolated and is not linked to any of the mentioned seas; in it, there are islands and... and very populated territories; and there are in it wonders that [are not found] in the aforementioned seas, according to was referred by the author of the mentioned book.

⁴⁴ Ibn ‘Abbās, paternal cousin and companion of the Prophet Muḥammad, is one of the most important and reputed transmitters (*muḥaddith*) of his sayings and deeds. See Gilliot 2012.

⁴⁵ The term means in literal sense *geography*, but in the Maghrib it is often used figuratively as *map*.

⁴⁶ al-Mahdī Ibn Tūmart (d. 1130 in Marrakech), the leader of the Almohad movement in North Africa and al-Andalus. The Andalusī author Ibn ‘Abbād al-Rundī (d. 1389–90) composed a commentary on this work entitled *al-Durra al-mushayyada fī sharḥ al-Murshīda*.

4. COMMENTARY

4.1. General remarks

Colophons in Arabic and Islamic manuscripts⁴⁷ have different formats, contents and functions. They can serve, as in our case, as a platform for authorial constructions. More often they are an important source about production, reproduction or usage of a text. Their evolution followed specific structural features different from that of the rest of the work. While at first they barely differed from the rest of the text and included only the date of composition, little by little they became a systematized and differentiated structure that included more elements: author or copyist of the work, title of the work, place of composition (usually the name of a city or village), the recipient of the work or patron, circumstances in which it was composed or copied, its duration, until including literary statements and phrases in praise of God and the Prophet, as well as standardized and conventional personal indications, such as feelings of piety and calls to the reader to be compassionate and forgive the errors and weaknesses of the author or copyist.

As a general rule, colophons were redacted in the third person and placed at the end of the text in a pyramidal or triangular structure and set apart, with a particular calligraphy, from the rest.⁴⁸ Sometimes, a square arrangement, like the atlas of 1571 (fol. 1r), or even circular or polylobulated structures appear.⁴⁹ Very rare are the cases in which the colophon is placed at the beginning of the text.⁵⁰ All this evolution took place with particularities according to place and time.

Some of these features appear in al-Sharafi's colophons placing him within the patterns of the Maghribi Arabic and Islamic manuscript tradition. He did not follow the model and structure of Majorcan and Italian atlases and charts which the two known Muslim sea chart makers of the 15th century used.⁵¹ Traditionally, their colophons are small textual pieces — when they are present⁵² — limited to a brief reference to mapmaker's name, date and place of composition.

⁴⁷ On Islamic and Arabic colophons see Déroche 2000, pp. 198–206, 337–349; Déroche et al. 2016, pp. 318–321; Gacek 2009, pp. 71–76; Quiring-Zoche 2013; Seşen 1997; Piemontese 1986.

⁴⁸ This is a characteristic proper of *Qurʾān* colophons, as well as the use of abbreviations, as the letter mīm (م = *tamma*, thus is, it finishes) and hāʾ (ه = *intahā*, thus is, it finishes) which also have a decorative function. These two features appear in the two colophons of the 1571 atlas (fols. 1r, 13v).

⁴⁹ The two last forms are visible in *Qurʾāns* of the 17–19th centuries. See Deroche 2000, p. 195.

⁵⁰ One example is the so called Aghlabi *Qurʾān* of Palermo. See Johns 2018.

⁵¹ They are Ibrāhīm al-Mursī in Tripoli (1461) and Muḥammad al-Ṭanjī in Tunis (1413–14).

⁵² See Astengo 2007, pp. 189–191; Campbell 1986, pp. 429–434.

Unlike his Majorcan and Italian counterparts, al-Sharafi used the colophons, mainly in the atlas of 1571 and the world map of 1579, to introduce and merge selected fragments of the sources he employed in the construction of his products to personal information. One mentioned source stands out above the others in all the colophons: al-Idrisi's *Opus Magnum*⁵³ entitled *Nuzhat al-mushtāq fī ihtirāq al-āfāq* (The Book of Pleasant Journeys into Faraway Lands), to which most of the geographical texts are attributed. He used the authority given by this author and the other quoted sources, which had become household brands in their very own knowledge fields in North African educated circles, to give the reader/listener the impression that all the new material had been appropriated from the *Nuzha* and the other sources, and at the same time that it was written under al-Sharafi's authorship.⁵⁴

In addition, al-Sharafi's colophons reveal different, complex and elaborated translation strategies to construct identity and to present himself as a multi-layered person and a respectful authority. They show his desire to be positioned in different environments and social levels: firstly, he presents himself (1) as a person born in Sfax and then settled in Qayrawan, (2) a *mālikī*, follower of the dominant Islamic legal doctrine in North Africa, (3) and as a humble and modest servant of God who desires to be part of the people of the knowledge of God (*ahl al-ilm*), and the people of truth and certitude (*ahl al-ḥaqq wa-l-taḥqīq*),⁵⁵ that is, the Sufis. At the same time, through his references to portolan charts, sailors and sea instruments positions himself within the local circles where customs and traditions (*'ādāt wa tajārib*) were a valuable source of knowledge.

Al-Sharafi's process of authority creation underwent an evolution in his three works, going from a preference of anonymity to an intense authorial display. He perfected this complex and thoughtful process in order to find a balance between his own authority and the one obtained from his sources, making his products recognizable as his own creations.

From the point of view of politics of translation studies several processes are recognizable. The first one is the abovementioned concept of intersemiotic translation or transmediation, that is, "when the traces of the source medium, its semiotic and structural characteristics do not vanish or become transparent but remain perceivable and continue to work within the target medium".⁵⁶ Al-Sharafi transmediated at different levels into his three works the semiotic and structural features of different medias, mainly the Maghribi *Qur'ān* tradition and the Arab-Islamic manuscript tradition. In the case of the transmediation from these two media, rooted in

⁵³ For an analysis of al-Idrisi's quotations in al-Sharafi's works see Tiburcio and de Castro 2023.

⁵⁴ On authorship and authority in Medieval and pre-modern Arabic and Islamic societies see Behzadi and Hämeen-Anttila 2015; Szombathy 2018.

⁵⁵ See R. Dozy, *Supplément aux dictionnaires arabes*, vol. 1, p. 307.

⁵⁶ See Jakobson 1959; Italiano 2016, pp. 11, 36, 38; Emström 2014, pp. 27–32; Parlog 2019.

al-Sharafi's social and cultural background, the translation is known as *domestication* or *familiarization*, a process through which the text in the target language is constructed in a way that it sounds familiar to the target audience, evacuating it, to the degree possible, from the foreignness of the text in the source language.⁵⁷

Besides the format,⁵⁸ the characteristics of the *Qur'ān* tradition are mainly distinguishable in the colophons at the level of symbolism, especially in the aesthetic and emotive power of *Qur'ān* decorations (knot and wavy frames, colors, Kufic calligraphy, the arrangement of the opening pages, religious texts) enveloping his products in a kind of Islamic sacredness easily recognizable. The same process occurs with regard to the Arabic and Islamic manuscript tradition whose main traces in the three colophons appear textually (Islamic quotations and formulas, distribution of the information, references to sources, oral and *adab* information, poetic licenses) and visually (the alternative use of red and black inks, the framing of the texts within a black or red frame, the particular arrangement of colophons, embellished calligraphy or decoration).

The colophons also demonstrate al-Sharafi's continuous adherence to traditional patterns of authorial construction. This takes place in particular through the concept known as multiplicity of voices or polyphony. His resorting on the voices of well-established authorities to embed his persona in their prestige forms part of the traditional Islamic and Arabic conception of the author's function, which is fundamentally that of an intermediary. Passing on his authority to other voices, including statements and accounts of others previous authorities, the author distributes the authorial responsibility on many shoulders.⁵⁹ However, at the same time, his innovation and creativity when composing different colophons for each of his works, as well as his growing desire to let his own voice become audible and make himself known, shows a quite new tangible sense of individuality and authority.

These patterns of innovation are also reflected in al-Sharafi's awareness of new modes of authority statement. Two examples appear in the colophons. The first is when he calls himself *Kātib al-aḥruf* (lit. the writer of these letters), a denomination whose earliest reference appears in the second half of the 16th century.⁶⁰ The second example appears in the visual layout of the colophon of the 1571 atlas (fol. 1r). Its more elaborate calligraphy, the use of red ink, and the columnar arrangement is similar to that found on the opening pages of manuscript copies from the 16th century onwards.

⁵⁷ See Venutti 1995, pp. 17–41; Bielsa 2014.

⁵⁸ In relation to the format of the atlases and their resemblance to North African *Qur'āns*, see Guesdon 2016.

⁵⁹ See Behzadi and Hämeen-Anttila 2015, pp. 14, 15.

⁶⁰ In concrete in a Syriac copy of the *Book of Curiosities* preserved in the Bodleian Oxford Library, dated in 1571, and signed by a certain Maṣṣūr who calls himself "*al-Miskīn* (= the poor) *Kātib al-aḥruf*". See Rappaport and Savage-Smith 2014, p. 5.

Hence, al-Sharafī positions himself both in the past and the present. His discourse of modesty is reinforced by the appropriation of Sufi references and terminology,⁶¹ and his eclectic training by the inclusion, at the end of the colophon of the atlas of 1571 (fol. 13r), of a proverb that resembles one emitted by the Hafsid ruler, Mulay Ḥasan (d. 1551) when he encountered the Sufi Shabbī leader in Qayrawan.⁶²

4.2. The Atlases of 1551 and 1571

Both colophons are different, visually and textually, but they were inserted by al-Sharafī on a title page. This was not at all the case of Italian, Majorcan, or French atlases from the 14th to the early 16th centuries, where this authorial information either appears on the border of a sectional chart or in a calendar, or is missing.⁶³ If it appears on a sectional chart or in a calendar it offers a brief set of data, as mentioned above.⁶⁴ But in an atlas there is no fixed place for this kind of information. It can be added to the first folio, the last folio, or some folio between the two. Only after the introduction of title pages in printed books did it become more regularly provided on the first or second page as can be seen in some atlases produced during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.⁶⁵

In the atlas of 1551 (figure 1), al-Sharafī proceeds differently. In his authorial construction, he adopted a structure that alludes to patterns used in early modern printed books. Its ornamental calligraphy and arrangement also bears similarity to the first double page and frontispieces of Maghribī illuminated *Qurʾāns*.⁶⁶ Although the opposite half of al-Sharafī's title page has been cut out by an earlier owner or reader, it is not improbable that it contained an image, as is often the case in early

⁶¹ Of special interest is the use that al-Sharafī makes of some names attributed to God that form part of lists elaborated by Sufi authors, as Ibn ʿAbbād, known as “the Most Beautiful names of God”. See Casassas 2016; Casassas 2007, pp. 76–90.

⁶² He said: “and we were lions and men respected us. There has come a time when we fear the hares”. See Monchicourt 1939, p. 124.

⁶³ See, for instance, the atlas composed by Diogo Homen in 1574. On the right down corner appears: “Diegus homé Cosmographus Lusitanus fecit venettis ano apartu Virginis 1574”. See MS Paris, BnF, CPL GE DD-2006 (RES), fols. 7v–8r.

⁶⁴ Some examples are those of Pietro Vesconte's 1313 atlas (BnF, ms 687-RES), Grazioso Benincasa's (d. 1482) 1467 atlas (BnF ms 6269 CR) and Baptista Agnese's (d. 1564) 1544 atlas (BNE, ms RES/176). For Muslim mapmakers, as al-Ṭanjī and al-Mursī, see Herrera Casais 2010; Herrera Casais 2018.

⁶⁵ One example is the atlas composed by Vincent Prunes in 1600. See MS, MMB, 4775, fol. 2r.

⁶⁶ See Déroche 2000, pp. 256–257. One example is the Tunisian *Qurʾān* in MS, Paris, BnF, Arabe 388, fols. 1r, 87r.

modern printed title pages.⁶⁷ Using this structure al-Sharafi transferred to it the aforementioned characteristics employed in Islamic manuscripts, especially *Qurʾān* quotations, calligraphy, terminology related to Islamic dating, extended praises of the divine and Sufi discourse. This well-executed opening colophon founds its closing clause in the final statement of the last folio (fol. 8r), in such a way that the atlas begins and ends with the same *Qurʾān* quotations, in the same embellished epigraphic calligraphy. This conception of the atlas as a close and interconnected unit is also applied in the two other works.

The intentional anonymity of this colophon is reflected in al-Sharafi's simple self-presentation as a humble craftsman from Sfax, a modest and pious Muslim whose identity is still forming.

The colophon of this atlas shows another process of transmediation, also applied in the 1579 world map.⁶⁸ In addition to *Qurʾān* calligraphic patterns, the script shows aesthetic modes and semiotic features of local Islamic calligraphy employed in religious architecture, as was mentioned in the presentation of this atlas. The calligraphy of the extant half of al-Sharafi's title page reflects strong similarities to the cursive style characteristic of late Hafsid architecture present in funeral steles, tombstones and prominent inscriptions placed on mosques and oratories from Sfax and Qayrawan.⁶⁹ This translation suggests that al-Sharafi may have received some training in this sophisticated art, adding a new hidden layer to his persona.

In the atlas of 1571, al-Sharafi applied a different cultural approach (see figure 2). Its multiplicity of colophons confirms a shift in al-Sharafi's concept of authorial identity and personal goals. This shift includes a different definition of what constitutes a respectable atlas for a potential buyer in Qayrawan in 1571. In some sense, he "literalized" the entire atlas.⁷⁰ Al-Sharafi opted for features found in other Islamic manuscripts. This allowed him to construct his identity and authorship as the work's creator in a more developed form. To achieve this purpose, he mentions a

⁶⁷ Two examples can be seen in *Ars memorandi per figuras evangelistarum* (printed ca. 1465–70), MS, Bamberg, Bamberg Library, fols. 1v–2r, online: http://digital.bib-bvb.de/view/bvb_mets/viewer.0.6.5.jsp?folder_id=0&dvs=1663170790404~323&pid=1593453&locale=es&usePid1=true&usePid2=true, and in *Vita et transitus S. Hieronymi* (printed in 1490), MS, Madrid, BNE, INC/1989, fol. 1v–2r, online: Visualización detallada – Biblioteca Digital Hispánica (BDH) (bne.es)

⁶⁸ This appears in the calligraphy of the frames and in some inland inscriptions in the Asian side of the chart, as the Gog and Magog Iron Gate and the Caspian Sea.

⁶⁹ Mahfoudh has stressed the importance of the local Maghrebi calligraphy – later cursive Hafsid style – in the decoration of Sfax monuments unlike other cities as Tunis and Qayrawan. See F. Mahfoudh 1988.

⁷⁰ This process has been called "poeticity" by some scholars as Robert Stockhammer (2007) to illustrate cartographical (and other mediums) processes that exhibit an affinity to the written works and its practices. See Italiano 2016, pp. 69–72.

greater number of sources and extends the colophon to other standard referential resources that were often used in Islamic manuscripts. In particular, he takes inspiration from the introduction, where the text's title and author, a patron and the purpose of the work could be mentioned. Opening new places for what we call secondary colophons, he multiplied the opportunities for promoting himself as an author and presenting himself as an indispensable link in the transmission of the knowledge that had been spread by other trustworthy authors and scholars for centuries.

The usage of the form of the colophon for framing this atlas as a close and interconnected unit by placing two main colophons at the opening and closing pages, al-Sharafi finds a new way to show that he conceived of his work as a well-rounded product (fols. 1r, 13r). The two colophons are easily distinguished by a careful and elaborated rounded Maghribī calligraphy. They appeal to the work's readers by their familiarity of form, surprising them at the same time by the unusual placement. To the opening colophon al-Sharafi dedicated a special format: a whole page, in red ink, and simple and modest decoration does not reproduce them but rather takes up patterns used in the beginning of the text, especially in early modern Islamic manuscripts.⁷¹ The opening colophon in the atlas of 1571 includes a number of by now standard formulas: praising God and the Prophet, asking His benediction for his parents, his relatives and all the Muslims, as well as everyone who would read, see and listen to his atlas. To all these conventional declarations al-Sharafi added two new layers related to his identity. Now he is settled in Qayrawan and presents himself as a follower of the Māliki legal doctrine and a Sufi who aspires to the knowledge of God. The closing colophon (fol. 13r) summarizes his authorial strategy developed throughout the entire work, which fundamentally consists in his self-representation as a link in the chain of transmission of a wide spectrum of knowledge: he mentions the list of his valuable sources, ancient and current, revalues the work of his father and grandfather and confirms his identity as a Sufi. He ends with the mentioned proverb that connects him both with the ancient North African folklore and with his current time by using almost literally the same lines pronounced by the Hafsīd sultan Muḥayyir Ḥasan.

⁷¹ See, for instance, *Ithāf al-murīdīn li-ʿaḳīdat Umm al-burhān* (copied ca. 1755), opening page, MS Harvard University, Houghton Library, Ms Arab SM578, online: [https://iif.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:13763542\\$61i](https://iif.harvard.edu/manifests/view/drs:13763542$61i); Abulcasis's *al-Maqāla fi-l-ʿamal bi-l-yād*, (16th century), MS Paris, BnF, Arabe 2953, fol. 1v, online: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b84061750/f8.item.r=arabe%202953.zoom>, or Ibn Tūmārt's *al-Murshīda*, MS Paris, BnF, Arabe 1451, fol. 98, online: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8419211m/f199.item.r=arabe%201451.zoom>.

The World Map of 1579⁷²

In this world map al-Sharafī created another new appealing product (image 3) in which his individuality and authorship can be recognized. Through a risky, ambitious and thoughtful undertaking ‘Alī al-Sharafī saw in the large format of two parchment sheets joined together an occasion for translating the textual parts and the visual elements of his main source, al-Idrīsī’s *Nuzhat al-mushtāq*. This process took place in multiple ways, intertwining Idrīsī’s textual, iconographic and cartographic elements to the point of making them almost interdependent, into a coherent representation of the entire Old World. Conceptually, al-Sharafī conceived his world map as a single chart transferring elements typical of the Majorcan portolan tradition to the Asian side and transmediating elements proper of Islamic geographical traditions to the western half of the Old World. He carried both transpositions out in such a manner that the terminating line of the two parchments unifies at the same time as it separates the main cultural traditions. This understanding of the world map as a solid unit composed of two interconnected halves is important to comprehend the authorial construction made in the colophon/s and to interpret the form in which it most likely was meant to be read or seen.

Al-Sharafī placed of the main colophon according to the standard location on Majorcan and Italian portolan charts where this kind of information is commonly entered on the neck of the parchment, generally the left side of north-oriented charts. But this was not a rigid pattern.⁷³

Building on that pattern, al-Sharafī performed a complex identity construction. Relying on the abovementioned “block text pattern” and the layout techniques of Arabic and Islamic manuscript traditions, al-Sharafī composed a colophon consisting of several intertwined layers, fusing different kinds of texts and information. These short textual pieces are in complete harmony with the image they accompany, that is, the Mediterranean Sea. Furthermore, they are connected to the information written on the opposite side of the map. Hence, the colophon offers a care-

⁷² The complete visual and textual analyses of the world map of 1579, as well as the other two atlases, will be part of a forthcoming publication dedicated to the edition and English translation of the three works, directed and supervised by Sonja Brentjes. I thank her for sharing these texts and ideas with me.

⁷³ The emplacement of the colophon in portolan charts varied over times. In the 14th and first half of the 15th century we can find it commonly in the neck of the parchment, in the upper side, in the lower side, and sometimes in two places within the same chart. In the second half of the 15th century onwards the common place was the neck of the parchment or next to it. See, for instance, Giacomo Maggiolo 1563’s chart, MS Paris, BnF, Sgy 1704 Rés where the colophon says: “Iacobus de Maiolo composuit hanc cartam in Ianua anno domini 1563 die XX may in Iospitaleto”, online: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b550070685/f1.item.zoom>; or Mecià de Viladestes 1413’s chart, MS Paris, BnF, GE AA-566 (RES): “Mecià de Viladestes me fecit in anno MCCCXIII”, online: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b55007074s?rk=21459;2>.

ful sequential order in which nothing that appears happens to be there by accident. Firstly, al-Sharafī elaborates a coherent version of selected bits and pieces extracted from al-Idrīsī's *Nuzha*, mainly its Introduction, giving information about the Mediterranean Sea, the Black Sea and the Adriatic Sea, which are represented on the western half of the chart, stressing the interconnection between text and image. This planned sequence of the three seas, from East to West, differs from that in the atlas of 1571. It proposes to the viewer a specific reading of the map, as will be discussed below.⁷⁴ Secondly, he makes a strong authority declaration repeating twice that he is the creator (*ṣāniʿ*) of the chart and the writer of these words (*kātib hādhihi l-aḥruf*). Then, as in the atlas of 1571, he covers his persona with the authority of his main sources, some of whom remained anonymous in the atlases: *Qurʾān*, Ptolemy, al-Idrīsī's *Nuzhat al-mushtāq*, nautical maps and oral sources, such as sailors and mariners. Finally, he introduces his genealogy, including his grandfather's name, Muḥammad, and thus following a long-established Islamic mode of valorising authorship and (textual or interpretive) authority and fidelity known as *isnad*.⁷⁵ As in the previous two works, he completes the colophon with a Sufi reference (*ahl al-ʿilm*), ending with the mentioned stereotyped sentences and invocations towards God, but in this case, including among his blessings, everyone who acquires his products.

This unusual colophon is not isolated. It finds its counterpart on the eastern side of the map where al-Sharafī composed a similar kind of text in a block frame. In this case, focusing on the Eastern Tarry Sea, he adds new facets and sources, as the *mirabilia* information or the surprising length of the Earth in years, both connected to Gog and Magog territories. With this new information al-Sharafī introduced himself as competent in new fields of knowledge. These new fields are those related to apologetic works and the Alexander the Great tradition where those *mirabilia* elements appear.⁷⁶ Through the authority of three main characters firmly established in the collective imaginary of North Africa, Ibn ʿAbbād al-Rundī, Ibn Tūmārt and Ibn ʿAbbās, al-Sharafī immerses himself in the historical dimension that goes back to the Prophet leading through the late 11th and early 12th and the later 14th centuries to al-Sharafī's own time.

Visually speaking, the content of the two inscriptions placed face to face on the eastern and western sides of the world map mirroring each other suggests that

⁷⁴ The atlas of 1571 and the *Nuzha* propose a different reading. In both works the information about the Black Sea is given after the information about the Adriatic Sea. See al-Idrīsī 2002, pp. 11–12; MS Oxford, Bodleian Library, Marsh 294, fol. 3r.

⁷⁵ The *isnād* is an element proper of the *ḥadīth* (the sayings and acts of the Prophet Muḥammad) and it is an essential to validate their veracity and reliability. See Aerts 2018.

⁷⁶ Versions of the so-called Alexander romance received much attention during the turbulent political, military and religious climate of the second half of the 16th century in which all kinds of prophetic and apologetic texts and stories circulated. See Doufikar-Aerts 2010; Zuwiyya 2011; Green Mercado 2020.

al-Sharafi might have considered both of them as colophons. The fact that there are two of them is surprising, since a colophon usually terminates a work. Their presence suggests two different manners to read the map. If both texts were indeed meant to be colophons, then al-Sharafi proposed to read the map in both directions. If only the text at the western end of the map is meant to be the map's colophon, then its mirror image should be seen as an inscription that marks the beginning of the map in the East. As we have seen in both atlases, al-Sharafi used the same framing by two colophons, one on the title page, the second after the last table or text. This technique of framing could also be found occasionally in 16th and 17th manuscript copies of other texts.⁷⁷ Al-Sharafi's decision to work with two colophons may reflect this trend to unify the design of texts with regard to their beginning and end in early modern Islamic societies. But if a spectator of the map perceived of it as a manuscript, he would have recognized the western inscription as its entrance point, because the west appears on the right side due to the map's southward orientation. The Arabic writing and reading direction from right to left would support such an interpretation. This perspective obliged to transform the colophon on the western side into an introduction to the map, which is what the inscription in its first part does. As a result, the eastern side needed to be endowed with a parallel inscription, since the East was the terminal point of an Arabic-language reader. In this case, a second colophon needed to be composed. This is, again to some extent, what al-Sharafi did. He wrote several sentences of geographical content mimicking therewith the end of a main text in a manuscript before the colophon. The features of this eastern colophon exposed above suggest that boundaries between text and colophon are thus erased. However, the ending of the western colophon with the standard sentences of an Islamic colophon, including the author's name, the places of his settlement, the date of the work and religious formulas, identifies it as a colophon, despite its first part serving as an overview of the western seas. Hence, this demands to read the inscription on the eastern side as a non-colophon. But it is neither parallel to a title page, because it begins and ends with information of geography. As a whole it thus only mirrors the first part of the colophon on the western side.

This reflection on the textual differences between the two parallel inscriptions makes us seriously consider that al-Sharafi planned his map to be read from the East to the West, as it is corroborated by the material orientation of the map, where the western end of the world with its colophon is placed near the neck of parchment sheet. But at the same time this contradicts the map's southwards orien-

⁷⁷ This is the case, for instance, of a version of the geographical work, the *Kharīdat al-ʿajāʾib wa-farīdat al-gharāʾib* (The Perfect Pearl of Wonders and the Precious Pearl of Extraordinary Things) (mis)attributed to Sirāj al-Dīn Ibn al-Wardī (d. 1457), copied in 1622 and found in MS Copenhagen, DET KGL Bibliotek, Cod. Arab. 93, fols. 1r, 213r, online: <http://www5.kb.dk/manus/ortsam/2009/okt/orientalia/object59528/da/#kbOSD-0> = page:429

tation and the Arabic reading and writing direction. What seems quite likely is that al-Sharafi wanted to encourage his audience to turn the map around when reading it or to move along and around its borders.

In conclusion, it has to remain an unanswered question how al-Sharafi wished his world map to be looked at and read and how its eventual buyer profited from its content. The comparison of the two mirror inscriptions leaves, however, no doubt that both halves were constructed in such a manner that any observer would understand their visual and textual interconnectedness and the challenge it proposed. This process of cultural translation that reached a high degree of perfection, innovation and development in the world map of 1579 began already in the atlas of 1551. In this process, al-Sharafi's construction of his authority and his multifaceted person executed in the colophons of his three works was an important endeavour to wrap himself and his works in religious, literary, Sufi, astronomical, practical and genealogical layers of prestige, respect and authority.

5. IMAGES



Fig. 1: Atlas of 1551, MS Paris, BnF, Arabe 2278, fol. 1v; Fig. 2: Atlas of 1571, MS Oxford, Bodleian Library, Marsh 294, fol. 1r.



Figure 3: Eastern (on the left) and western sides of the World map, MS, Rome, Italian National Central Library.

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STYLISTIC FEATURES OF FOURTH/TENTH-CENTURY ARABIC COLOPHONS, WITH PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO SCRIBAL BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

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INTRODUCTION

Colophons are one of the few places in Arabic manuscripts where we can extract information to understand more about scribes who undertook such crucial work. The earliest colophons date from the third/ninth century. Prior to this, we do not have any examples to draw upon from the manuscript tradition. The reason for this quite possibly relates to the fact that at this earlier period, they were not yet a well-established scribal tradition. What links with this is the fact that most books prior to this period were aide-memoirs of scholars for their personal use in audition sessions.¹ The structure of the earliest colophons that have been previously studied are relatively simple. In many cases, colophons from the third/ninth century merely bear a statement of completion, a line that states that the book is completed. In the fourth/tenth century, further, yet still basic, information can be found. Here scribes sometimes also state their name and the date they completed their copying.² Such brief pieces of information are precious in allowing us to understand at least a little into the lives of these scribes.

However, this crucial period in the study of colophons has been hitherto understudied. A few notable exceptions include Ramazan Şeşen's general article on

¹ See, Gregor Schoeler, *The Oral and the Written in Early Islam*, trans. Uwe Vagelpohl (London: Routledge, 2006); Gregor Schoeler, *The Genesis of Literature in Islam: From the Aural to the Read* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009).

² Ramazan Şeşen, 'Esquisse d'une Histoire Du Développement Des Colophons Dans Les Manuscrits Musulmans', in *Scribes et Manuscrits Du Moyen-Orient*, ed. François Déroche and Francis Richard (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France, 1997), 193–94.

Arabic colophons. However, all the examples that he cites from the fourth/tenth are brief. Most of the examples he cites only contain the copyists' name and the date of copying. In two cases, the place of copying is also stated.³ Rosemarie Quiring-Zoche's article also deals with colophon in general, and she touches upon some examples from the earliest period. She identifies the two earliest Arabic colophons as stemming from the third/century. The first is found in a copy of the *Gharīb al-Ḥadīth* of Abū 'Ubayd al-Qāsim b. Sallām al-Harawī. Its content is basic as it merely consists of an indication of completion, salutations on the Prophet Muhammad and a date of completion.⁴ The other example is from an Arabic translation of St. Paul's letter to the Hebrews. Again, it is relatively simple, consisting of an indication of completion, thanks to the Messiah and the month of completion.⁵ Quiring-Zoche then moves on to the fifth/eleventh century and elaborates upon a colophon found in a copy of the *Ma'ānī al-Qurān* of Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad al-Zajjāj. This colophon is considerably longer and contains far more details, details that allow us to build a better picture of the scribe who copied the manuscript.⁶

However, this leaves an important lacuna from the fourth/tenth century. A middle period where we begin to see the emergence of much longer and more elaborate colophons. Our article focuses on colophons from this crucial period, and we elucidate the way additional information was incorporated into colophons. We show the stylistic features of these colophons, and present previously unexplored colophons from this century. In doing so, we pay special attention to the ways in which information contained in such colophons can help us reconstruct biographical information of scribes.

CHALLENGES

One of the main challenges of focussing on the fourth/tenth century is that most of the colophons, much like the ones identified by Şeşen, are exceedingly simple, making it difficult to even construct rudimentary information about the scribe. Take, for example, MS Berlin Petermann II 589, which runs as (see fig. 1):⁷

[1] تَمَّ أشعارُ القُطايي في سنة أربع وستين وثلاثماية
 [2] الحمدُ لله كما هو أهله وصلى الله على رسوله محمد وآله وسلّم
 [3] حسبنا الله ونعم الوكيل

³ Şeşen, 196.

⁴ Rosemarie Quiring-Zoche, 'The Colophon in Arabic Manuscripts. A Phenomenon without a Name', *Journal of Islamic Manuscripts* 4 (2013): 51.

⁵ Quiring-Zoche, 51.

⁶ Quiring-Zoche, 52.

⁷ MS Berlin Petermann II 589, fol. 76r. This paper is based on an analysis of primary sources mentioned in Elseadawy, Yousry. "Arabic Scribal Practices in the 3rd-4th/9th-10th Centuries: Normative Sources and Manuscript Evidence." PhD Diss. Freie Universität Berlin, 2022.

[1] The poems of al-Quṭāmī is now completed in the year 364 [957/8].

[2] Praise be to God as he deserves, and may the peace and blessings of God be upon his messenger Muhammad and his family,

[3] God is sufficient for us, and he is the best disposer of affairs.

Here the scribe is completely unknown. The colophon only states the title of the book, the year of completion and praises to God and the Prophet Muhammad. In this example, we do not even know the name of the scribe. Another example of a colophon that is indicative of this period is MS Chester Beatty Ar. 3051 (see fig. 2). It is also simple in its formulation and only just a little more useful than the previous colophon in allowing us to understand more about the scribe.⁸

[1] تم كتاب البديع والحمد لله حقَّ حمده [2] وصلّى على محمد النبي وآله وسلّم تسليماً

[3] ... عبد الله... آيدَه الله ... والله...

[4] في شهر ربيع الأول من سنة سبعين وثلاثمائة [5] وكتب [6] غزّين بن عبدالله الرودباري

[1] The *Kitāb al-Badi'* is completed, praise be to God, the praise [that is his] right,
[2] and may the peace and blessings of God be upon the Prophet Muhammad and his family

[3] ... Abdullah ... May God aid him... For God...

[4] In the month of Rabi' I of the year 370 [980/1] and [6] Ghabzīn ibn 'Abdullah al-Rūdbārī [5] wrote it.

In this example, the colophon starts with an indication of completion and the title of the work. This is followed by praise to God and salutations upon the Prophet. The scribe then ends the colophon by stating the date it was copied and his name. This last piece of information is more useful for our purposes. Due to the nature of name construction in the Arabic language, and in particular the *nisbah*, we can postulate some rudimentary information. Ghabzīn ibn 'Abdullah al-Rūdbārī was unlikely to be ethnically Arab but Persian. The first name, Ghabzīn, is a Persian name and the *nisbah*, al-Rūdbārī, also alludes to Persian ancestry. Yet, aside from this, we do not have any further information about this scribe.

However, by casting our net widely, we can identify four colophons from the fourth/tenth century that are considerably longer and help us reconstruct a greater picture of their scribes. We focus on these four colophons for the specific reason that they are the very earliest, most elaborate colophons. An analysis of these colophons is further critical insofar as they plug the gap between simple colophons in the third/ninth century and the more elaborate ones found in the fifth/eleventh century. What follows first is a transcription and breakdown of these four colophons. This is then followed by an analysis of the colophons elucidating the stylistic and biographical details we can extract from them.

⁸ MS Chester Beatty Ar. 3051, fol. 104v.

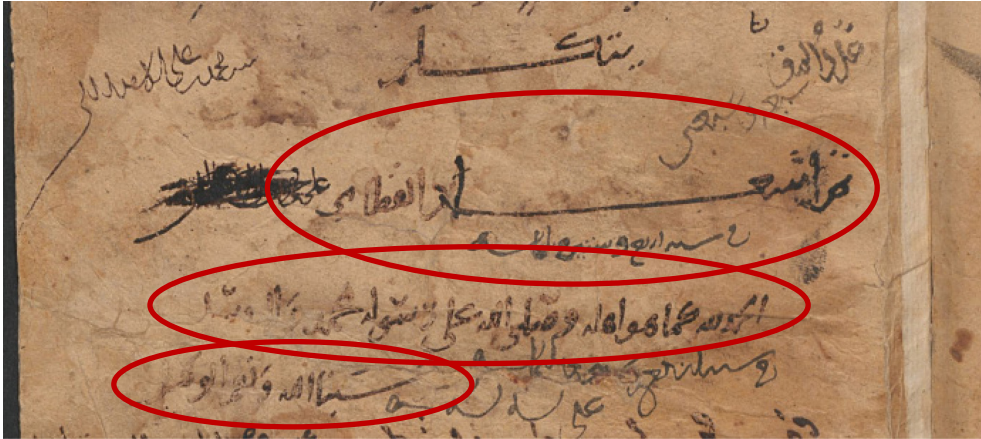


Fig. 1 *Ash'ar al-Quttami*. MS Chester Beatty Ar. 3051, fol. 104v.

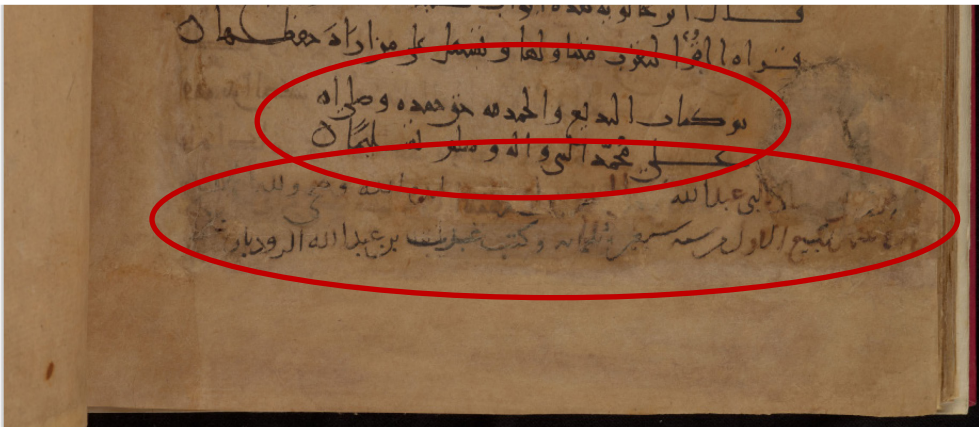


Fig. 2 *Kitab al-Badi'*. MS Berlin Petermann II 589, fol. 76r.

TRANSCRIPTION

C1: MS Dār al-Kutub 139 Naḥw, part 3

Our first example comes from a manuscript of the *Kitāb Sibawayh* (The book of Sibawayh), one of the most important treatises of Arabic grammar.⁹ The colophon reads (see fig. 3):

[١] تمّ [٢] الجزء الثالث من [٣] كتاب سيبويه
[٤] والحمد لله على عونته وإحسانه

⁹ MS Dār al-Kutub 139 Naḥw, part 3, fol. 120r.

[٥] وصلى الله على محمد النبي وآله الطيبين الأخيار

[٦] ويتلوه في الجزء الرابع هذا باب الإعراب.

[2] The third part of [3] the *Kitāb Sibawayh* (“The book of Sibawayh”)

[1] is completed.

[4] Praise be to God for his help and beneficence.

[5] May God bless the Prophet Muḥammad and his pure and most excellent family.

A blank space follows this. After which, the colophon states:

[6] This will be followed by the fourth section: “This is the chapter on inflection.”

Another blank space follows this. After which, the colophon then goes on to state:

[٧] كتب [8] اسماعيل بن أحمد بن خلف القصار [9] بخطه

[10] لنفسه [11] في محرم سنة إحدى وخمسين وثلاثمائة

[12] نسأل الله علماً نافعاً وقلباً خاشعاً

ولساناً صادقاً.

[8] Ismā‘īl ibn Aḥmad ibn Khalaf al-Qaṣṣār [7] wrote [this] [9] in his hand

[10] for himself [11] in the month of Muḥarram in the year of 351[962].

[12] We ask God for beneficial knowledge, a devout heart, and an honest tongue.

C2: MS Qarawiyyīn. 874/62

Our second example comes from a copy of the *Mukhtaṣar Abi Muṣ‘ab Aḥmad ibn Abi Bakr al-Zuhrī* (The Compendium of Abū Muṣ‘ab Aḥmad ibn Abi Bakr al-Zuhrī),¹⁰ an important text associated with the Mālikī school of law. It is distinguished from other Mālikī legal texts due to its focus on the narrations of Imām Mālik himself, and not other notable scholars of this school. It reads (see fig. 4):

[1] تمّ [٢] مختصر أبي مصعب أحمد بن أبي بكر

الزهري رواية أبي اسحق ابراهيم بن سعيد

بن عثمان المدني [٣] والحمد لله كثيراً

على عونه وإحسانه وتأيدته وصنعه

¹⁰ MS Qarawiyyīn 874/62, p. 347.

[2] *The Compendium of Abū Muṣ'ab Aḥmad ibn Abī Bakr al-Zuhri and the Transmission of Ibrāhīm ibn Sa'id ibn 'Uthmān al-Madanī* [1] is finished, [3] and much praise be to God for His help, beneficence, support, and favour.

A blank space follows this. After which, the colophon goes on to state:

[4] وكتب [5] حسين بن يوسف عبد الإمام الحكم

المستنصر بالله أمير المؤمنين

[6] أطال الله بقاءه وأدام خلافته

[7] في شعبان من سنة تسع وخمسين وثلاثمائة

[8] وصلى الله على نبيه محمد [وآله]

وسلم كثيراً جزيلاً

[5] Ḥusayn ibn Yūsuf, the slave of al-Imām al-Ḥakam al-Mustanṣir bi-Allāh the commander of the faithful

[6] may God elongate his life and make his caliphate permanent, wrote [it].

[7] [This was] in Sha'bān 359 [969–70].

[8] May God bless His Prophet Muḥammad [and his family] and grant them much peace.

C3: MS Dār al-Kutub 663 Tafsīr

Our third example is from a copy of the *Mushkil al-Qur'ān* (“Difficulties in the Qur'ān”) by Ibn Qutaybah (see fig. 5):¹¹

[1] تم [2] كتاب المشكل

[3] والحمد لله أولاً وآخراً [4] وصلى الله على محمد النبي سرمداً دائماً

وآله وسلم كثيراً [5] وحسبنا الله حيواتنا وبعد وفاتنا

ونعم الوكيل والمعين ربنا ونعم المولى ونعم النصير

[6] وكتب [7] محمد بن أحمد بن يحيى [8] رحمه الله [9] في شهر ربيع الآخر

من سنة تسع وسبعين وثلاثمائة [10] رحم الله كاتبه ومن نظره

فيه من المسلمين آمين يارب العالمين [11] ويقول سوف يبلى يدي

ويبتي الكتاب وقال

[12] إن آثارنا يدُ علماء فانظروا بعدنا إلى الآثار

¹¹ MS Dār al-Kutub 663 Tafsīr, p. 165.

[13] اللهم انفعنا بما علمتنا وعلّمنا ما تنفعنا به وزدنا علماً

ينفعنا. [14] الحمد لله بجميع محامد الله ما علمنا منها

وما لم نعلم على جميع نعم الله ما علمنا منها وما لم نعلم

لدى جميع خلق الله ما علمنا منهم وما لم نعلم.

[2] The Book *Difficulties in the Qurʾān* [1] is finished
 [3] and praise be to God in the beginning and in the end, [4] and may
 God bless the Prophet Muḥammad and his family always and forever
 and grant them peace [5]. May God reward us in our lives, and after our
 death,
 He is our greatest representative, our greatest helper, and our greatest
 supporter. [7]

Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā [8] may God have mercy upon him,
 [6] has written [it] [9] in Rabīʿ II
 379 [July-August 989]. [10] May Allah have mercy upon the writer and
 anyone who looks
 at it [the book] among the Muslims. Amen, Oh Lord of the worlds. [11]
 He [the copyist] says: He [God] will decompose my hands,
 but the book will remain. [12] He said:
 “if our traces convey knowledge, look at our traces after we have
 gone.”¹²

[13] God! Benefit us with what you have taught us and teach us what
 benefits us and increase us in knowledge
 which benefits us. [14] Praise be to God, the owner of all good actions
 which we know
 and which we do not. For his favours, which we know and do not know,
 granted to the creatures of God, whom we know and whom we do not.

C4: MS Leipzig Vollers 505 –01, 02, 03

Finally, our last example comes from a manuscript that contains three collections of poetry attributed to: Abū Ṭālib ʿAbd Manāf ibn ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib, (the uncle of the Prophet Muḥammad), Abū al-Aswal al-Duʿli, and Suḥaym ʿAbd Banī al-Ḥaṣḥās.¹³ The first and second collections end with a colophon. However, there is

¹² This verse is a reformulation of a more common verse which is usually used when talking about the traces of someone or something. However, here the word *alaynā* (about us) is replaced with the word *ʿilman* (knowledge). We could not identify the source of the origin of the verse.

¹³ MS Leipzig Vollers 505 – 01, fol. 32r, Vollers 505 – 02, fol. 55v.

no colophon for the third collection. It is unclear if there was a colophon to begin with, or (as is perhaps more likely) there was, but it was lost later. The first and the second colophon are almost identical in their content. The only difference lies in their title. Hence, for this study, we focus on the first colophon as representative of this manuscript. The colophon reads as follows (see fig. 6):¹⁴

[1] نَجَزَ [2] شِعْرُ أَبِي طَالِبٍ عَبْدِ مَنَاةَ عَبْدِ الْمُطَّلِبِ بْنِ هَاشِمٍ
 [3] وَكَتَبَهُ [4] عَفِيفُ بْنُ أَسْعَدَ [5] لِنَفْسِهِ [6] بِبَغْدَادَ [7] فِي الْحَرَمِ سَنَةَ ثَمَانِينَ وَثَلَاثِمِائَةَ
 [8] مِنْ نَسْخَةٍ بَخَطِ الشَّيْخِ أَبِي الْفَتْحِ عُثْمَانَ بْنِ جِنِّيٍّ [9] اِدَامَ اللَّهُ عَزَّه
 [10] وَعَارَضْتَهُ بِهِ وَقَرَأْتَهُ عَلَيْهِ [11] وَاللَّهُ الْحَمْدُ كَثِيرًا.

[2] The Poetry of Abū Ṭālib ‘Abd Manāf ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib ibn Hāshim [1] is completed.

[4] ‘Afif ibn As‘ad [3] wrote it [5] for himself [6] in Baghdād [7] in Muḥarram 380/[March-April 990]

[8] from a copy by the hand of al-Shaikh Abū al-Faṭḥ ‘Uthmān Ibn Jinnī, [9] may God make his power endless.

[10] I collated it with him [Ibn Jinnī] and read it to him [Ibn Jinnī], [11] and much praise be to God.

¹⁴ MS Leipzig Vollers 505 – 01, fol. 32r.

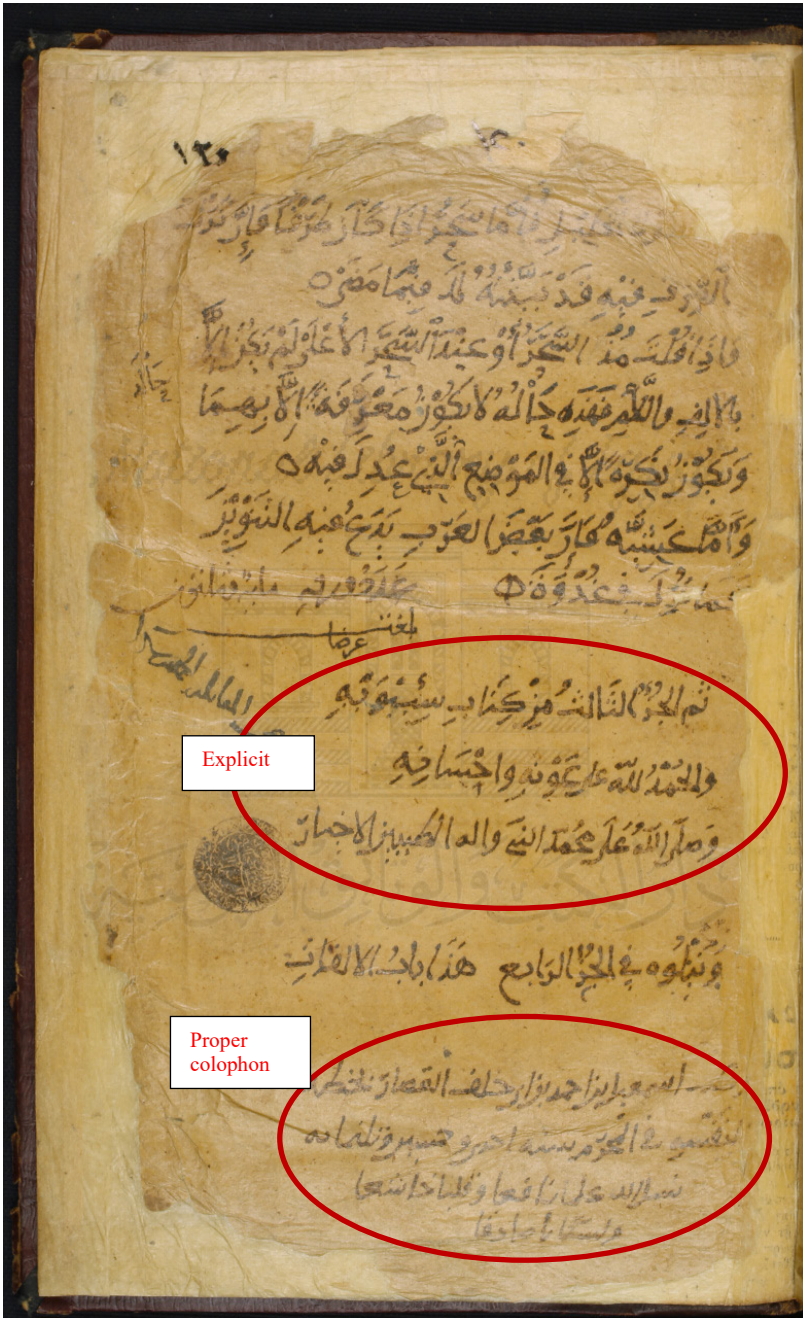


Fig. 3 MS Dār al-Kutub 139 Naḥw, part 3, fol. 120r.

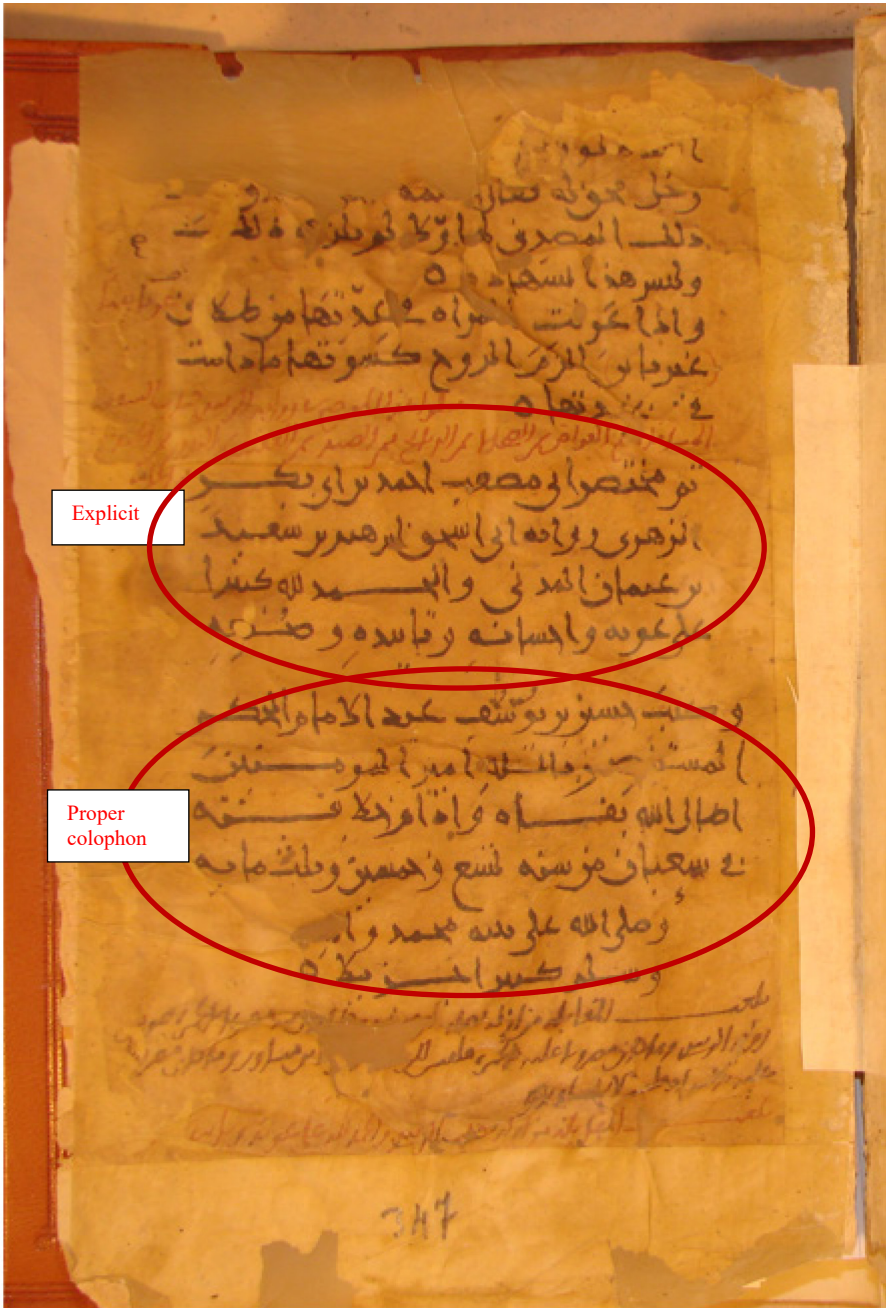
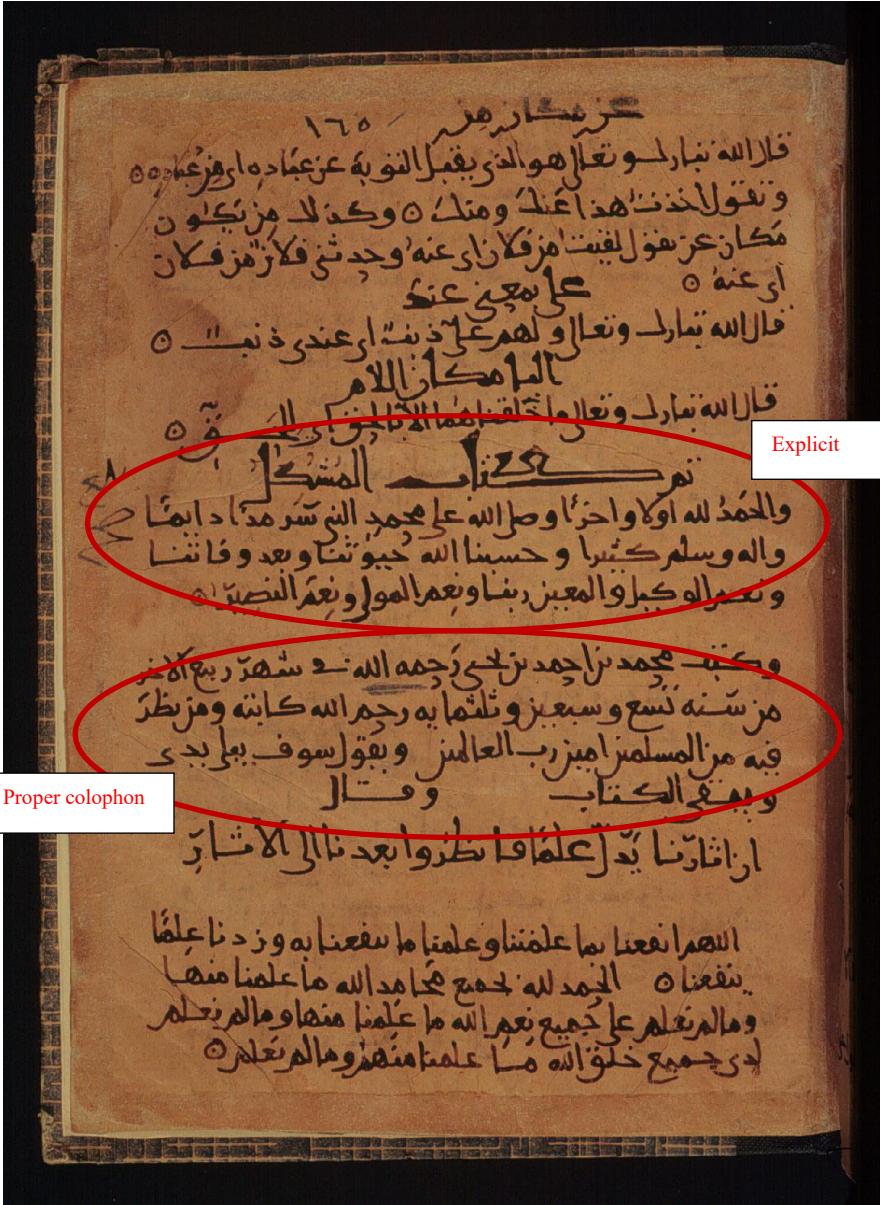


Fig. 4 MS Qararawiyyin 874/62, p. 347.



Proper colophon

Explicit

Fig. 5 MS Dar al-Kutub 663 Tafsir, p. 165.

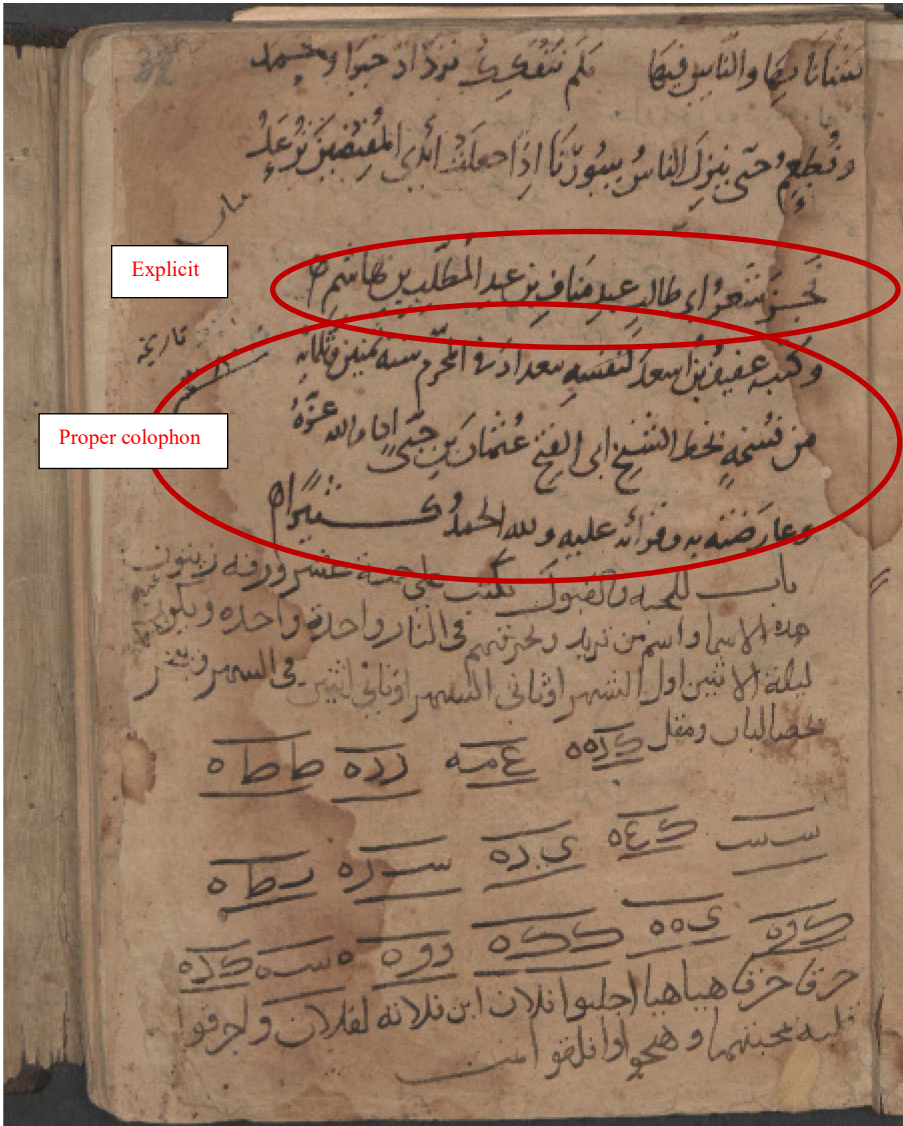


Fig. 6 MS Leipzig Vollers 505 – 01, fol. 32r.

STYLISTIC FEATURES

A practice that can be observed immediately from our four examples is how our copyists make a conscious effort to separate the statement of completion from other additional information in the colophon. The standard simple formulation indicating the completion of the colophon, as seen in other examples from previous studies, is also seen here. For C1, C2, and C3, completion is indicated with the use of the verb *tamma*, while C4 employs the verb *najaza*. These verbs that indicate completion are then followed by scribes stating the actual title of the books. C1 is

more specific in stating that it is the “third part of [3] the *Kitāb Sibawayh*” which has been completed, while the other three colophons state the actual titles, for C2 and C3 this is *Mukhtaṣar Abī Muṣ‘ab...* and *Mushkil al-Qur‘ān* respectively. C4 does not have a specific title since it is a collection of poems and hence the author of the collection is used as the title – *Shi‘ru Abī Ṭālib*.

After stating the completion, all four colophons go on to state the standard Islamic formula of the *ḥamdalah*, invocations praising God. Typically, the *ḥamdalah* is also followed uniformly by the *ṣalwalah*, or praises on the Prophet Muhammad. However, of our four, only two include the *ṣalwalah*, C1 and C3. Curiously enough, C4, the colophon attached to a manuscript purportedly containing poems attributed to the Prophet’s uncle, Abū Ṭālib, also does not include the *ṣalwalah* in the colophon. This shows that at least in the fourth/tenth century, the practice of having the *ṣalwalah* in the colophon was not an automatic universal practice.

The practice of writing the indication of completion, the title, the *ḥamdalah* (and the *ṣalwalah*), is standard for colophons from this and the previous century. However, in these four examples, the colophons then continue. What is interesting is that these scribes make a conscious effort to separate the aforementioned parts from further additional details. From this early period, we see a conscious distinction being made between what Adam Gacek has previously alluded to as the ‘explicit’ and the rest of the colophon, which we term the ‘proper’ colophon. The ‘explicit’ coming from the Latin ‘explicitus est liber’, is used to refer to the beginning portion of the colophon.¹⁵ The explicit in our case includes the aforementioned bits of information, the indication of completion, the title, the *ḥamdalah* and the *ṣalwalah*. It is after this that we have the ‘proper’ colophon which goes on to detail further information. The information contained in the ‘explicit’ are relatively uniform. It may have been scribal practice in the fourth/tenth century to include these agreed upon bits of information in the ‘explicit’ part of the colophon. What follows this is considerably varied and it is likely that scribes had more freedom to write what they wished from what was common practice in the ‘explicit’. This may be another reason why they all uniformly make a conscious effort to separate the ‘explicit’ from the ‘proper’ colophon.

C1 and C2 do this most overtly by leaving a clear space between the two parts of the colophon. C4 also indicates a clear break, however, in contrast to C1 and C2, the scribe uses a text divider marker to make this distinction – a circle with a line drawn through it. C3 adopts both of these practices concomitantly by incorporating a space as well as text divider marker. The marker, in this case, is a circle with a dot inside. C1 also differs from the other three colophons in that there are three parts to the colophon that are divided with a space. After the ‘explicit’ (which is the first part), the scribe writes a second part which consists of a solitary line that

¹⁵ Adam Gacek, *Arabic Manuscripts A Vademecum for Readers* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 101. However, the term ‘explicit’ is used to refer to the end of the text as well.

states, “[6] This will be followed by the fourth section: ‘This is the chapter on inflection.’” Having indicated in the note of completion that the third section had been completed, the scribe felt that what was to follow was a sufficiently different piece of information that merited a break from the ‘explicit.’

Having made a distinction between the two parts of the colophon, the scribes begin the ‘proper’ colophon by referring to themselves in the third person with the verb *kataba* (he wrote), followed by their respective names – Ismā‘īl ibn Aḥmad ibn Khalaf al-Qaṣṣār (C1), Ḥusayn ibn Yūsuf (C2), Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā (C3) and ‘Afif ibn As‘ad (C4). It is important to note that these four fourth/tenth-century manuscripts show remarkable unity in using the same verb to refer to the scribe. It has been noted how scribes in other periods would use various other formulations to refer back to them, such as *‘alā yad*, *‘alā yaday*, *bi-qalam* and *bi khaṭṭ*.¹⁶

RECONSTRUCTING BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

We now move on to the specifics of the colophons and how we can use this information to construct biographical information on scribes. At an initial reading, the details contained in the colophons may seem sparse. However, a close and detailed examination shows significant insights into the lives of these people allowing us to tentatively reconstruct biographical details.

The first course of action one would assume would be to consult biographical dictionaries. However, here we arrive at difficulties in that it is exceedingly difficult to pinpoint a specific figure to the names mentioned in the colophon. With certain names such as Ismā‘īl ibn Aḥmad ibn Khalaf al-Qaṣṣār and ‘Afif ibn As‘ad we find no mention of names at all.¹⁷ However, this is not surprising since only the most famous and notable scribes are mentioned in such sources.¹⁸ On the other hand, other more exceeding common names such as Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā have multiple attestations in other dictionaries.¹⁹ However, due to the scarcity of information, it is impossible to correlate any of the names with our scribe. Another valuable piece of information that is sometimes attached to the names of

¹⁶ Gacek, 239; Adam Gacek and Ali Yaycioglu, ‘Ottoman Turkish Manuscripts in the Islamic Studies Library and Other Libraries of McGill University’, *Fontanus, From the Collections of McGill University* 10 (1998): 42; François Déroche, *Islamic Codicology An Introduction to the Study of Manuscripts in Arabic Script* (London: Al-Furqān Islamic Heritage Foundation, 2015), 320.

¹⁷ See for example, Shams al-Dīn al-Dhahabī, *Siyar a‘lām al-nubalā’*, ed. Shu‘ayb al-Arna‘ūt, 25 vols (Beirut: Mu‘assasat al-Risālah, 1996); al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Madīnat al-Salām wa-akhbār muḥaddithihā wa-dhikr quṭṭānihā al-‘ulamā’ min ghayr ahlihā wa-wāridihā*, ed. Bashshār ‘Awwād Ma‘rūf, 17 vols (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 2001).

¹⁸ Gacek, *Arabic Manuscripts A Vademecum for Readers*, 240.

¹⁹ Shams al-Dīn al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh al-islām wa-wafayāt al-mashāhīr wa-l-a‘lām*, ed. Bashshār ‘Awwād Ma‘rūf (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 2003), 6:593, 6:796, 7:512, 8:406, 11:465, 13:45, 15:398.

scribes are terms such as *imām*, *qāḍī*, and *khaṭīb*, which signify their occupation.²⁰ However, these additional details are also not found in our corpus.

We start with our first scribe of C1, Ismāʿīl ibn Aḥmad ibn Khalaf al-Qaṣṣār. From his name, it is difficult to ascertain his ethnicity. In contrast to Ghabzīn ibn ʿAbdullah al-Rūdbārī and his likely Persian affiliation, it is more difficult to pinpoint an origin for Ismāʿīl ibn Aḥmad because of the generic nature of the name. However, the *nisbah*, al-Qaṣṣār, does allude to what was perhaps the occupation of Ismāʿīl ibn Aḥmad’s ancestors. At one point, they were bleachers. However, it is unlikely that Ismāʿīl ibn Aḥmad himself is a bleacher, as we will elaborate on later.

The first and most obvious piece of information we can gather about Ismāʿīl ibn Aḥmad with certainty is the time he was alive. This is because, alongside the indication of completion, he states the date he completed the copying process: “in the month of Muḥarram in the year of 351.” There is no indication of the specific day, meaning that the manuscript was completed sometime between February 13th 962 and March 15th 962. The place of copying is also not stated, making it difficult to place Ismāʿīl ibn Aḥmad more specifically in the Islamic world.

The specific wording and the purpose of why a manuscript was copied by a scribe is an invaluable source for constructing biographical details. We could justifiably posit that Ismāʿīl ibn Aḥmad ibn Khalaf al-Qaṣṣār was some kind of a scholar of Arabic language or grammar, and not merely a scribe. The primary reason for this is that Ismāʿīl al-Qaṣṣār stresses that firstly, he himself wrote this copy of the text, and secondly, he did so for himself: “[9] in his hand [10] (*bi-khaṭṭih*) for himself [11] (*li-nafsih*). The use of *bi-khaṭṭih* underscores that he indeed wrote this entire manuscript and did not commission someone else to do so, and *li-nafsih* underlines that it was for himself. In other words, it was his personal copy of the book. We need to take note of the significance of such details. The book that Ismāʿīl al-Qaṣṣār is copying for himself is the *Kitāb Sībawayh*, one of the most important and advanced treatises on Arabic grammar. Even in modern times, a person who owns a printed copy of this book is most probably a scholar of the Arabic language, or at the very least a very advanced student. When we contextualise this to Ismāʿīl al-Qaṣṣār’s milieu, this becomes even more potent when we consider the time and effort required in producing this work by hand. For a scribe to have done so, not for income but for his own use, such a person would need to be intimately invested with the contents of this work.

²⁰ Jan Schmidt, ‘Manuscripts and Their Function in Ottoman Culture: The Fatatri Collection in the Leiden University Library’, *Journal of Turkish Studies* 28, no. 1 (2004): 350.

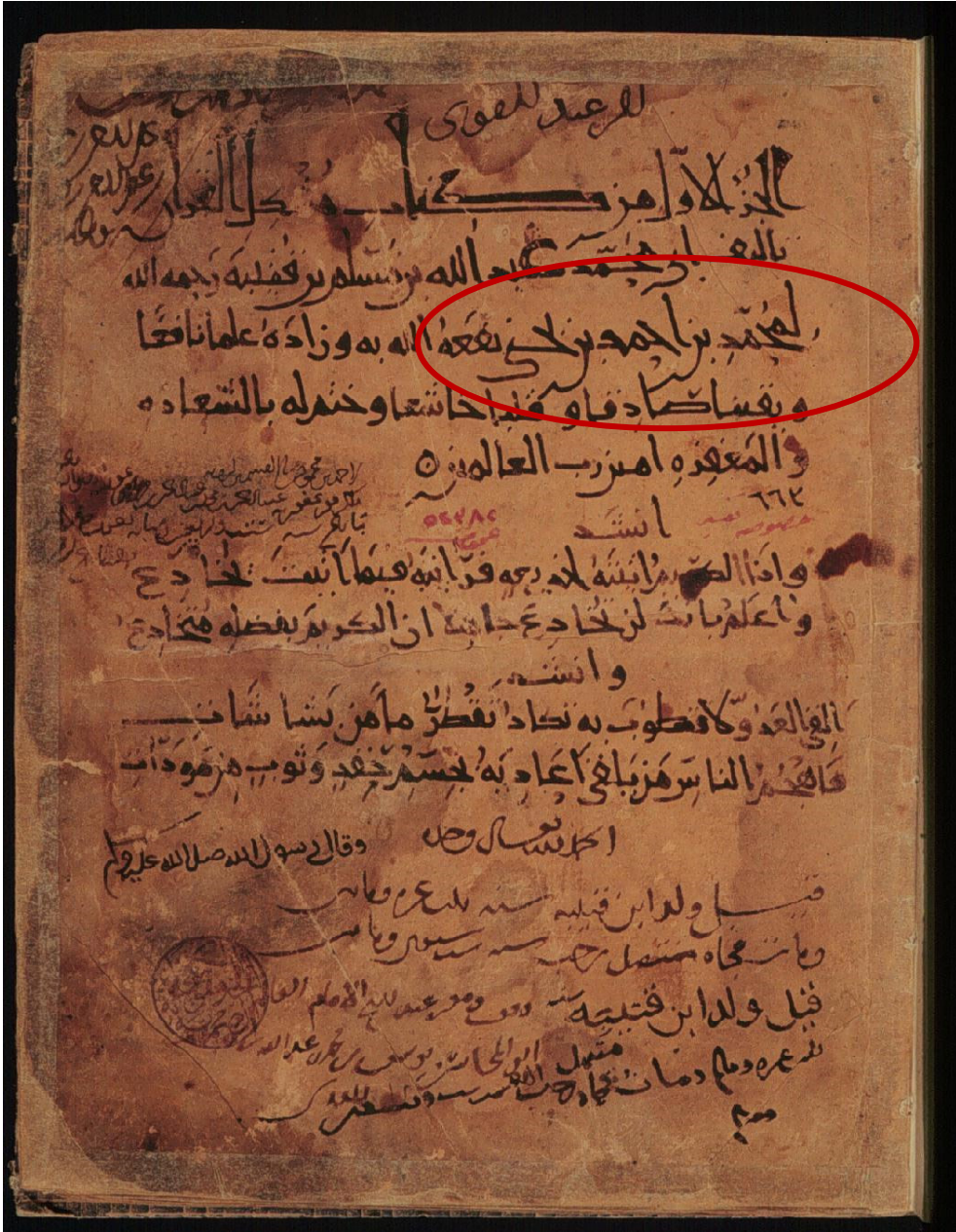


Fig. 7: MS DK 663 Tafsir, the title page.

In a similar way, we have good reason to suppose that the scribe of C3, Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad was also a scholar in his own right. However, this time in the field of Qur’ānic studies. However, when we examine the colophon, we find it merely stating: “[7] Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā [8] may Allāh have mercy upon him, [6] has written [it].” In contrast to the previous colophon, Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad does not state that he wrote this manuscript for his personal usage us-

ing the expression *li nafsihī*, or an equivalent. One would then assume that the manuscript was written for someone else. However, this is not the case when we look at the title page. Here we find a note that states that the manuscript was written for (*li-*) Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā (see fig. 7). When we then compare this with the colophon, we find that this is in fact the copyist himself! This construction of attributing a manuscript to the scribe on the title page is an unusual practice. Déroche notes that the particle ‘for’ (*li*) is normally used to refer to a patron.²¹ However, this unique case breaks this convention. Regardless, the fact that Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad, wrote a copy of the *Mushkil al-Qurʿān* for himself underscores that he is in all likelihood a Qurʿānic studies scholar.

Praise to God and salutations to the Prophet, respectively termed as *ḥamdalah* and *ṣalwalah*, are commonly used pious formulas in colophons. However, the pious formulas that Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad includes in his colophon are unusually long, especially when compared with the other colophons. He firstly begins with the generic formula, after stating the indication of completion: “[3] and praise be to God in the beginning and in the end, [4] and may God bless the Prophet Muḥammad and his family always and forever and grant them peace [5].” The general message and wording is similar to what is stated in the other three colophons. For example, the scribe of C2, Ḥusayn ibn Yūsuf, states the *ḥamdalah* as, “and much praise be to God for His help, beneficence, support, and favour.” He also states the *ṣalwalah*. However, in contrast with the other scribes, he separates it from the *ḥamdalah* and places it at the end of the colophon: “May God bless His Prophet Muḥammad [and his family] and grant them much peace.” The scribe of C1, Ismāʿīl ibn Aḥmad, also states the *ḥamdalah* and *ṣalwalah*. However, as is more common, he keeps them together, “[4] Praise be to God for his help and beneficence. [5] May God bless the Prophet Muḥammad and his pure and most excellent family.” He also ends the colophon by writing a prayer: “[12] We ask God for beneficial knowledge, a devout heart, and an honest tongue.” This is an adaptation of a prayer attributed to the Prophet in a *ḥadīth* recorded in the collection of Ibn Mājah.²² The most muted of the four colophons with regards to pious formula is the scribe of C4, ʿAfif ibn Asʿad. In his colophon, he merely states a few solitary words of the *ḥamdalah*: “and the much praise be to God.” There is unusually no mention of the *ṣalwalah*.

The stark differences in the writing of pious formulas underscore that the specifics of formulas, such as the length and content, were up to the discretion of the individual scribe. This discretion gives us an insight into the psyche or thinking of such scribes. We would postulate that the varying lengths of pious formula potentially allude to the piety of these scribes. What correlates with this are the lengths of the pious formulas with regards to the four topics of our manuscripts: grammar, law, Qurʿanic studies, and poetry. All four subjects have some religious affiliation

²¹ Déroche, *Islamic Codicology An Introduction to the Study of Manuscripts in Arabic Script*, 316–17.

²² Ibn Mājah no. 925.

and importance. However, the most 'purely' Islamic discipline, the subject that is the most intimately tied to religion, is Qur'ānic studies. The rest have practical value even if we take away their religious element. It is interesting to note then that the most prolonged and most sophisticated of the pious formulas by far relate to our scribe of the *Mushkil al-Qur'ān*, Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā.

We can analyse just how long the pious formula is. After the usual *ḥamdalah* and *ṣalwalah*, Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad adds a prayer not only for himself but also the reader of the manuscript: "May God reward us in our lives, and after our death, He is our greatest representative, our greatest helper, and our greatest supporter. [7]." This is unique because it is the only example of the four, where the scribe offers prayers to the reader of the manuscript. Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad follows this by stating his name and the date he completed his copying. After this, prayers for himself and the reader is once again formulated, "[10] May Allah have mercy upon the writer and any Muslim who looks at it [the book]. Amen, Oh Lord of the worlds [11]".

It can be extrapolated that for Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad this act of writing was not merely a professional endeavour but had eschatological significance. The length of his pious formulas underscores him to be religiously committed. For him being a scribe was not merely a vocation, but something that would benefit him after his death in the hereafter. The value of the manuscript is not merely hinged upon the immediate benefits of the copying, whether that be financial or for personal knowledge, but he expects it to be passed on to later scholars who will benefit, and this in turn will benefit him after his death. He writes: "He [the copyist] says: He [God] will decompose my hands, but the book will remain." Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad highlights that his physical hands will one day decompose and perish, but the output of those very hands will remain. This is then reiterated in a line of poetry. "[12] Furthermore, he said: "if our traces convey knowledge, look at our traces after we have gone."²³ This verse is a reformulation of a more common verse that is usually used when talking about the traces of someone or something. Due to this context of religious knowledge, Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad replaces the oft-used word *alaynā* (about us) with the word *ilman* (knowledge).

The colophon then ends with more expansive prayers, which are merged and reworded from prayers that can be traced back to the Prophet in the *ḥadīth* literature. The first part is, "God! Benefit us with what you have taught us and teach us what benefits us and increase us in knowledge which benefits us," which is a rewording of prayers found in both the collections of al-Nasā'ī and al-Tirmidhī.²⁴ The

²³ This verse is a reformulation of a more common verse which is usually used when talking about the traces of someone or something. However, here the word *alaynā* (about us) is replaced with the word *ilman* (knowledge). We could not identify the source of the origin of the verse.

²⁴ Al-Tirmidhī *ḥadīth* no. 3599.

second part is a re-rendering of a *ḥadīth* found in Ibn Mājah:²⁵ “[14] Praise be to God, the owner of all good actions which we know and which we do not. For his favours, which we know and do not know, granted to the creatures of God, whom we know and whom we do not.” Overall, approximately two-thirds of the colophon is dedicated to prayers and invocations. This would reasonably allow us to suppose Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad to be religiously inclined and a man of piety.

The final piece of information, and the most explicit that we can gather on Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad, is the time in which he operated. He states the date of completion as falling “in Rabi‘ II 379.” The corresponding dates place him between July 13th 989 and August 12th 989. Unfortunately, he does not mention any place in the colophon, making it difficult to pinpoint his exact geographical location.

We now turn our attention to the scribe of C4, ‘Afif ibn As‘ad. Like our previous scribes, he can be identified as a philologist or, at the very least, a scholar of the Arabic language. Like the previous examples, ‘Afif ibn As‘ad writes that the manuscript was for his own personal use, “[5] for himself” (*li-nafsihi*). The reasons mentioned earlier still stand. Any scribe willing to toil over writing a manuscript for his own personal use is almost certainly a scholar in that discipline. However, what solidifies this further in this particular case is what ‘Afif ibn As‘ad states at the end of the colophon. He writes that the copy in which he made his personal copy was “[8] from a copy by the hand of al-Shaikh Abū al-Faṭḥ ‘Uthmān Ibn Jinnī”.

‘Afif ibn As‘ad may be unidentified in the sources, but Ibn Jinnī on the other hand needs no introduction. He is celebrated as the founder of the science of etymology, specifically *al-ishtikāk al-akbar* and the most learned authority on *tasrīf*. His two most significant works were the *Kitāb Sirr al-Ṣinā‘a wa Asrār al-Balāgha* and the *Kitāb al-Khaṣā‘iṣ fi ‘ilm uṣūl al-‘Arabiyya*. He held notable positions at the courts of both ‘Aḍud al-Dawlah and Shams al-Dawlah and had good relations with the famed poet al-Mutanabbī, engaging in correspondence with him on grammatical questions.²⁶ ‘Afif ibn As‘ad states that his manuscript was copied from a copy that was written by the hand of Ibn Jinnī.

However, what is more significant is what ‘Afif ibn As‘ad then goes on to further state. Not only does he use a direct copy of Ibn Jinnī’s for his own, but he also collated his copy with Ibn Jinnī himself, “[10] I collated it with him [i.e., Ibn Jinnī] and read it to him [i.e., Ibn Jinnī]”. The line gives us very good reason to believe that ‘Afif ibn As‘ad was a direct student of Ibn Jinnī. This process of copying a manuscript from a scholar, collating with that copy, and subsequently reading the copy to the teacher are some of the features of a teacher-student relationship.²⁷

²⁵ Ibn Mājah *ḥadīth* no. 3846.

²⁶ On Ibn Jinnī, see EI², s. v. “Ibn Djinnī;” HAWT, vol. 1: 114, suppl. vol. 1: 188–90; GAS, 9: 248.

²⁷ Gacek, *Arabic Manuscripts A Vademecum for Readers*, 65–71.

The final piece of information that we can construct on ‘Afif ibn As‘ad is the period in which he was alive and worked. Like previous cases, he also states the date in which he completed the process of copying. In this case, the manuscript is dated to “Muḥarram 380.” Therefore, the corresponding dates would fall between April 4th 990 to May 4th 990. However, unlike our previous cases, ‘Afif ibn As‘ad does state the place in which he completed his colophon – Baghdad. However, even without him stating the place of copying, his association with Ibn Jinnī and his dating of the text already allow us to reconstruct with relative confidence the place of copying.

Although Ibn Jinnī was born in Mosul sometime before 300/913, he was strongly associated with his teacher, Abū ‘Alī al-Fārisī for around a period of 40 years and it was with him that he was initially based at the courts of Sayf al-Dawlah in Aleppo and ‘Aḍud al-Dawlah in Fars. One may then suppose that ‘Afif ibn As‘ad could have been based in these two cities. However, it is more likely that his association with Ibn Jinnī was in the later years of the latter’s life when he was more prominent. Hence, the emphasis in the colophon in showcasing his personal link. This would then place ‘Afif ibn As‘ad in Baghdād, since in the later years of Ibn Jinnī’s life he was based there, where he succeeded his teacher al-Fārisī after his death in 392/1002.²⁸ ‘Afif ibn As‘ad may not be identified from biographical dictionaries, but from this colophon, we can confidently state that he was a scholar of the Arabic language, most probably etymology, and counting Ibn Jinnī as one of his teachers. He operated in the fourth/ninth century and was based in the city of Baghdād.

C2 is a particularly fascinating case for reconstructing the biographical details of scribes. Firstly, the scribe signs his name as Ḥusayn ibn Yūsuf and states the date of completion as Sha‘bān 359. This would correspond to the dates of 13th June 970 to 13th of July 970. Hence, we are aware of the time in which Ḥusayn ibn Yūsuf worked and operated. However, what makes this piece even more important is that he explicitly states that he was “the slave of al-Imām al-Ḥakam al-Mustanşir bi-Allāh the commander of the faithful.” He then goes on to praise him with the words, “[6] may God elongate his life and make his caliphate permanent.”

Hence, it is clear that Ḥusayn ibn Yūsuf is referring to a ruler somewhere in the Islamic world. We can confidently identify him with al-Ḥakam II, his full name being Abū al-‘Aş al-Mustanşir bi-Llāh al-Hakam b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān. Al-Ḥakam II was the second caliph of Cordoba, after his father and first caliph ‘Abdur Raḥmān III, who was responsible for the consolidation and unification of Muslim rule in the Iberian Peninsula.²⁹

²⁸ EI², s. v. “Ibn Djinnī;” HAWT, vol. 1: 114, suppl. vol. 1: 188–90; GAS, 9: 248.

²⁹ See Richard Fletcher, *Moorish Spain* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992); Hugh Kennedy, *Muslim Spain and Portugal. A Political History of al-Andalus* (London: Longman, 1996).

Al-Ḥakam II ruled as caliph from 15 October 961 to 16 October 976 in Cordoba. Due to this, in contrast with the previous manuscripts, we can confidently place the scribe Ḥusayn ibn Yūsuf at the geographical location of Cordoba, despite there being no mention of the place of copying in the manuscript. Being a slave, it is unlikely that Ḥusayn ibn Yūsuf was free to move and go as he wished, and it is also unlikely that he was himself a scholar but rather a professional scribe. What supports this is that he does not state, like the previous manuscripts, that he wrote this manuscript for himself. When we examine the handwriting itself it is the most uniform and sophisticated of our colophons. The colophon itself is centred almost perfectly in the middle of the page, taking care to be equidistant from both the right side and left side of the margin. The different bits of information in the colophon are also skilfully partitioned. The ‘explicit’ part of the colophon consists of four perfectly spaced and positioned lines. The ‘proper’ colophon then mirrors this by also being perfectly spaced and positioned and written in four lines. An additional two lines of the *ṣalwālah* are then placed after this taking care to again position it underneath and with additional marginalia. On the basis of this professionalism, it is clear that we are dealing with a professional scribe.

However, there is another piece of information that is particularly fascinating and corroborates a piece of historical information mentioned in passing. Al-Qāḍī ‘Iyād in his *al-Ilmā’ ilā ma’rifat uṣūl al-riwāyah wa-taqyīd al-samā’* mentions that al-Ḥakam al-Mustanṣir established some kind of a scriptorium in his palace: “Some of those I met, who were interested in such matters informed me that the books of Al-Ḥakam al-Mustanṣir Bi’llāh, came from those [who worked] at the ‘House of Collation and Copying’” (*Bayt al-Muqābalaḥ wa-l-Naskh*) at his palace.”³⁰ We do not have any other sources that corroborate if this was really the case. However, the fact that we have an example of a manuscript, with its professionalism and ascribed to a scribe who self-professes himself as the slave al-Ḥakam al-Mustanṣir, presupposes that there is good reason to suppose that our scribe Ḥusayn ibn Yūsuf was engaged and working at this very scriptorium.

CONCLUSION

In this paper we examined some of the earliest Arabic colophons from the fourth/tenth century. In particular, we demonstrated how the information contained therein helps us to reconstruct biographical information of scribes, an oft-neglected and silent group. Firstly, some of the most overt information in the colophon allow us to rebuild information on scribes. This includes the date of completion, which enables us to pinpoint the period in which a scribe operated. Sometimes the scribe also states the city where the manuscript was completed, which allows us to delineate the place.

³⁰ ‘Iyād al-Qāḍī, *al-Ilmā’ ilā ma’rifat uṣūl al-riwāyah wa-taqyīd al-samā’*, ed. Aḥmad Ṣaqr al-Sayyid (Cairo: Dār al-Turāth, 1970), 165.

We also focused on information in the colophon that are often overlooked but underscore further important details. We argued that the purpose of writing the manuscript tells us something about the scribe. Especially, if the scribe would copy a book for himself, indicated with the words *li-nafsihi*. A scribe who makes the effort to do so is almost certainly a scholar in that field. We then considered another element in colophons that is up to the discretion of the scribe, and that is the pious formulas. Although the use of pious formulas was a generally accepted practice, the length and breadth of the formulas possibly give us an insight into the piety of the scribe. We see in the case of the scribe of the *Mushkil al-Qurʿān* whose colophon is mostly dedicated to pious formula.

Finally, scribes also volunteer unique and insightful pieces of information, which may help to understand more about their lives. For example, in one case, the scribe states that he made his copy from one made previously by the grammarian Ibn Jinnī. He then goes on to say that he collated his copy with him. This indicates that Ibn Jinnī was likely a teacher of our scribe since such practices are associated with teacher-student relationships. Another fascinating example is where a scribe states himself to be a slave of the second caliph of Cordoba, al-Ḥakam II. Another source, in passing, states that this very same caliph established a scriptorium at his palace. When we compare the fact that the writing in this manuscript demonstrates a high degree of professionalism and the fact that this scribe was not copying this manuscript for himself but for others, it would seem to triangulate and substantiate the existence of such a scriptorium. In this way, not only are we able to use colophons to find out biographical information on the lives of scribes, but we can also use them to substantiate historical details.

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WINDOWS INTO THE WORLD OF PERSIAN-SPEAKING WEST SYRIANS: A STUDY OF COLOPHONS IN THREE EARLY PERSIAN BIBLICAL MANUSCRIPTS

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INTRODUCTION

The history of West Syrian communities in the Islamicate world has been the topic of several investigations. Reasonably, departing from the size of these communities, these investigations mainly deal with the history of Syriac or Arabic-speaking West Syrians. Rather untouched is the history and literary heritage of Persian-speaking West Syrians (hereafter: PsWS), which still need to be extracted from extant sources. This paper aims to introduce colophons of Persian manuscripts of biblical texts as sources of information about PsWS and their world. As a case study, this research focuses on a limited number of colophons, chosen from early manuscripts of Persian translations of biblical texts, translated in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and copied until the middle of the sixteenth century.

The present article begins with a concise overview of Persian-speaking Christians and their scripture in general, up to the end of the period from which the selected colophons come. The overview provides a brief historical background for the later analytical part of this study. Due to the lack of sufficient information about these communities, the overview does not exclusively focus on the history and heritage of PsWS, but, generally, deals with the Persian-speaking Christians of the time. This lack, as will be seen, is partially compensable, extracting pieces of information from the chosen colophons.

It is also worth mentioning what this article is not about. This article is not a contextual investigation of the details of the colophons under consideration. It is rather aimed to demonstrate: (1) the complexity of data that are embodied in these colophons; (2) the usefulness of contents of colophons for a wide range of investigations about PsWS and their world. Each and every detail of these colophons, in

its turn, is of help to (re)construct historical and cultural contexts in which the colophons were written.

PERSIAN-SPEAKING CHRISTIANS BEFORE THE MID-SIXTEENTH CENTURY:

AN OVERVIEW

The history of Persian-speaking Christians is less traceable than the history of Christianity in Persia. Based on some passages in Bardaisan's *The Book of the Laws of the Countries*, which was composed before the end of the second century, it can be deduced that there were *Iranian-speaking* Christians (those who may did not speak Persian but other Iranian languages) at that time.¹ Later, John Chrysostom (d. 407) mentioned the Persians among those who translated the scripture into their language.²

The Persian language did not overshadow Syriac, the language in which Christianity was introduced to the Persians. Probably, Persian-speaking communities existed also after the time of John Chrysostom but almost nothing is known about them and the language of their scripture. Syriac was the unrivaled language of Christianity in Persia and kept this position for centuries to come. The ecclesiastical split of the Syriac-speaking Church in the fifth century, which led to the emergence of two major Syrian Churches, the West Syrian and the East Syrian, did not threaten the supremacy of the Syriac language.

The West and East Syrian Churches are also called the Syriac Orthodox Church and the Church of the East, respectively. The attributed names, "West Syrian" and "East Syrian," might be misleading, particularly considering that the East Syrian Church, historically called "Nestorian," is also identified as the Church of Persia.

¹ See Hendrik Jan Willem Drijvers, *The Book of the Laws of Countries: Dialogue on Fate of Bardaisan of Edessa* (Assen: Koninklijke Van Gorcum & Comp. N.V., 1964), 61. The Chronicle of Arbel, dedicated to the history of the Parthians and Persians, includes further information about the spread of Christianity in the Iranian world in the first decades of the third century. Some passages in the chronicle, refer to the bishop of Dailam, a province located in the south of the Caspian Sea, and communities in Khurasan, two regions that match Bardaisan's references. See Eduard Sachau, *Die Chronik von Arbela* (Berlin: Verlag der königl. Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1915), 17–22. Some scholars considered the chronicle to be a forgery. See Christelle Jullien, "Chronicle of Arbela," in *The Oxford Dictionary of Late Antiquity*, ed. Oliver Nicholson, vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 336.

² John Chrysostom, *The Homilies of S. John Chrysostom on the Gospel of St. John* (Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1848), 13. Cyril of Alexandria (d. 444), mentioned Sogdian (another Iranian language) among the list of Christian liturgical languages. See Étienne de la Vaissière, *Sogdian Traders: A History* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 257. Sogdian is the most known Iranian language among those used by Christian communities. Remarkably, Nicholas Sims-Williams has published several contributions on this topic. In particular, see Nicholas Sims-Williams, "Christian Literature in Middle Iranian Languages," in *The Literature of Pre-Islamic Iran*, ed. Ronald E. Emmerick, Maria Macuch (London: I.B. Tauris, 2009), 266–87.

Departing from such terminology, one may suppose that the geopolitical border of the Persian and Roman Empires was also the border of the domains of these two Churches. That is not the case. Dioceses of the West Syrian Church, historically called “Jacobite,” were widely spread in Sassanid Persia (224–651 C.E.).

The 7th-century Arab conquest of Persia almost terminated the use of the pre-Islamic variation of Persian (or Pahlavi), called Middle Persian in scholarship,³ as a means of writing and reading. Presumably, the decline of Middle Persian accelerated the vanishing of manuscripts written in this language. Rapidly, however, after the conquests, Arabic developed into the *lingua franca* of the newly established Islamic Empire. Although Syriac continued its prevalence among the post-conquest Christian communities in Mesopotamia, Persia, and even further eastward, Arabic did not solely remain as the language of Muslims. It became the language of the scripture, liturgy, and theology for many Arabized Christians up to the shores of the Euphrates.

In the eastern territories of the Caliphate, Persian was spoken but was not widely used by Christians as a liturgical language.⁴ Gradually, a variation of Persian, called New Persian by scholars, developed from a vernacular to a cultural language in the ninth and tenth centuries.⁵ In its written form, New Persian was used by Christians, Muslims, and Jews.

Almost nothing is known about translations of the scripture into Persian in the early Islamic centuries.⁶ Likely, the communities used to read the scripture in Syri-

³ Scholars have identified three major phases for the development of the Persian language. The corresponding languages of each phase are called: Old Persian, Middle Persian, and New Persian. Roughly speaking, the Old Persian was used from the sixth century BCE to the fourth century BCE, Middle Persian from the fourth century BCE to the ninth century CE, and New Persian from the ninth century CE to the present time.

⁴ We know, nevertheless, that some disciples of John of Dailam (d. 738) attempted to keep their liturgy in (Middle) Persian. See Sebastian Brock, “Syriac Life of John of Dailam,” *Parole de l’Orient*, vol. 10 (1981–1982): 150–1. Scholars also hypothesized that a fragment of the Middle-Persian Psalter was translated “back to the sixth century or earlier, but it was written down between the seventh and eighth centuries or even later.” See Ahmad Tafazzoli, Albert Leonidovich Khromov, “Sassanian Iranian: Intellectual Life,” in *History of Civilizations of Central Asia*, vol. 3, ed. B. A. Litvinsky (Paris: UNESCO Publishing, 1996), 90.

⁵ The earliest extant exemplars of written New Persian date back to one century earlier. See Nile Green, “Introduction,” in *The Persianate World: The Frontiers of a Eurasian Lingua Franca*, ed. Nile Green (Oakland: University of California Press, 2019), 11–3.

⁶ For some new studies see Green, *Introduction*, 11; Mark Dickens, *Echoes of a Forgotten Presence: Reconstructing the History of the Church of the East in Central Asia* (Zürich: LIT, 2020), 155–7. It is worth mentioning that the dates of the fragments, labeled by scholars as “early,” are not that clear. The fragments of the New Persian Psalter that are written in Syriac script have no date and are not precisely datable. See Gilbert Lazard, “The Rise of the New Persian Language,” in *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 4, ed. Richard N. Frye (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 607. Yet, some scholars have dated the fragments to the

ac or maybe even in Arabic.⁷ For hearing about Christians who “knew no other language but Persian,” – who therefore needed to have the scripture in Persian – we should wait until the thirteenth century.

The earliest *dated* Persian Christian translation of the scripture was stated to be accomplished in 1220.⁸ A note written by the West Syrian church father Dāwūd al-Ḥimṣī (d. c. 1500) refers to this translation. According to al-Ḥimṣī, it was Yūḥannā ibn al-qass Yūsuf who for the first time translated the gospels into Persian in Tbilisi in that year.⁹ This might be a true claim when here New Persian as the language of the translation is meant.

Although the original version of this translation is not extant, we know from a later copy of it, manuscript Poc. 241, that Yūḥannā ibn Yūsuf was a West Syrian individual. This manuscript will be addressed in the next section again. For our concise historiography, it is important to notice that Yūḥannā translated this version on the eve of the Mongolian invasion of the Caucasus. In 1220/21, the Caucasus was the front of the war between the Khwarazmians, the dynasty which ruled the Caucasus and Persia, and the Mongols. Yūḥannā, however, dedicated his translation to King Kayqūbād I (d. 1237), the Seljuq sultan of Rūm and the great patron of Persian literature in Anatolia.¹⁰

The Mongolian conquest of Persia and Mesopotamia, accomplished with the fall of Baghdad in 1258, caused radical changes in a variety of aspects in the Middle East. After the period of massacres and destructions, Persia succeeded to trans-

eleventh century. See Matteo Nicolini-Zani, *The Luminous Way to the East: Texts and History of the First Encounter of Christianity with China* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022), 35. In his article on fragments of a New Persian translation of the Gospel of Matthew, Mauro Maggi estimated the date of the translation to be the eleventh century as well. See Mauro Maggi, “A Syro-Persian Version of Matthew 23.29–35,” in *Scritti in onore di Giovanni M. D’Erme*, vol. 1, ed. Michele Bernardini, Natalia L. Tornesello (Napoli: Università degli Studi di Napoli “L’Orientale,” 2005), 641–2. See also: Mauro Maggi, “New Persian Glosses in East Syriac Texts of the Eighth to Tenth Centuries,” in *Persian Origins – Early Judeo-Persian and the Emergence of New Persian: Collected Papers of the Symposium, Göttingen 1999*, ed. Ludwig Paul (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2003), 111–3.

⁷ The use of Arabic as a liturgical language for Persian-speaking Christians is a hypothesis that deserves to be studied further in light of available materials such as the colophons that will be discussed in this article.

⁸ See Jean Fathi, “D’Orient à l’Orient: Don Élias Fathalla, interprète de Napoléon, et la première église syrienne-catholique,” *Journal of Eastern Christian Studies*, 72(1–2) (2020): 84. Further studies on this earliest translation will be published in a forthcoming joint article by Jean Fathi and myself.

⁹ See Fathi, *D’Orient à l’Orient*, 84. For Dāwūd al-Ḥimṣī, also known as Dawid Puniqoyo, see Aaron M. Butts, “Dawid Puniqoyo,” in *Dawid Puniqoyo*, edited by Sebastian P. Brock, Aaron M. Butts, George A. Kiraz and Lucas Van Rompay, <https://gedsh.bethmardutho.org/Dawid-Puniqoyo>. I learned about this reference thanks to Jean Fathi.

¹⁰ See Fathi, *D’Orient à l’Orient*, 84.

form from a ruined land to the center of an economically and culturally thriving world. It became the commercial hub of the newly established Ilkhanid Empire, linking China to Europe. Intercontinental exchanges fashioned a new profile for Persia. Baghdad lost its prestige and position, and Tabriz took its place.

Under the patronage of the Turk Seljuqs and the Mongol Ilkhans, Persian developed as a multi-functional and trans-denominational language that was used in trades, literature, science, and religion;¹¹ a new *lingua franca* for Muslims, Christians, and Jews of the area.¹²

Mongol rulers of Persia, being born from Christian mothers or having Christian wives, had a semi-Christian identity. Under the early Ilkhans, local Christians enjoyed a temporary period of supremacy and prosperity.¹³ It was at this time that the see of the catholicos of the East Syrian Church was moved from Baghdad to inner Persia.¹⁴ The prominent figure of the West Syrian Church, Bar Hebraeus (d. 1286), was hosted in Maragha in northwest modern Iran. Importantly, even Latin Christians had the benefit of this occasion, utilizing it for their missionary activities.¹⁵ Christian literature in different languages of the region, particularly Persian, profited from this historical occasion.

Later political instabilities of the region led to an ecclesiastical ramification in the West Syrian Church in 1292.¹⁶ The split of the Church into four patriarchates weakened the communities, causing the conversion of the members of the commu-

¹¹ See Doris Behrens-Abouseif, *The Book in Mamluk Egypt and Syria (1250–1517)* (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 15; Nadja Danilenko, *Picturing the Islamicate World* (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 93; Timothy May, *The Mongol Conquest in the World History* (London: Reaktion Books, 2012), 232–42.

¹² For the flourishing of the 14th-century Persian Jewish literature see Herbert Paper, “Judeo-Persian,” in *Encyclopedia of Modern Jewish Culture*, ed. Glenda Abramson, vol. 1 (Oxon: Routledge, 2005), 440.

¹³ Joel Thomas Walker, *The Legend of Mar Qardagh: Narrative and Christian Heroism in Late Antique Iraq* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2006), 275; Peter Jackson, *The Mongols and the West* (London: Routledge, 2005), 119–20; Bruno De Nicola, “The Role of the Domestic Sphere in the Islamisation of the Mongols,” in *Islamisation: Comparative Perspectives from History*, ed. A.C.S. Peacock (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017), 362.

¹⁴ Wilhelm Baum, Dietmar W. Winkler, *The Church of the East: A Concise History* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 95.

¹⁵ James D. Ryan, “Christian Wives of Mongol Khans: Tartar Queens and Missionary Expectations in Asia,” in *The Spiritual Expansion of Medieval Latin Christendom: The Asian Mission*, ed. James D. Ryan (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), 290. The language of Catholic missionary in the region was Persian. See Krzysztof Stopka, *Armenia Christiana: Armenian Religious Identity and the Churches of Constantinople and Rome (4th-15th Century)* (Kraków: Jagiellonian University Press, 2016), 175.

¹⁶ Dietmar W. Winkler, “The Syriac Church Denominations: An Overview,” in *The Syriac World* (London: Routledge, 2019), 125.

nities to Islam and the incline of the metropolitans to Rome.¹⁷ In parallel with this schism, the conversion of the last Mongol rulers to Islam worsened the situation for all Christians in Persia.¹⁸ Those in Mesopotamia experienced a holocaust and their churches were demolished.¹⁹

As far as the writing and reading of the scripture in Persian are concerned, the Mongolian invasion did not interrupt what was disseminated in 1220.²⁰ As will be addressed in the next section, we learn from a post-invasion source that new generations in Christian communities of northern Persia, which traditionally were familiar with Syriac or Armenian, knew no other language but Persian.

Persian manuscripts of the scripture, especially of the gospels, continued to be written and copied in the coming centuries after the Mongols. The continuity was accompanied by new opportunities and challenges, those which reached their peak in the sixteenth century when the Safavid dynasty (1501–1736) came to power. Some of the kings of the dynasty, among those Tahmasp I (d. 1576), were not tolerant of Christians.²¹ Despite that, thanks to the efforts of European figures, notably Giambattista Vecchietti (d. 1619) and Jerónimo Javier (d. 1617), who took care of copying the Persian translation of the scripture, some new copies were made in Persia, India, and Europe.

The colophons of three manuscripts are considered for the present study. The texts of these manuscripts were translated in the thirteenth-fourteenth century into Persian and were copied in the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries. They are the earliest Persian biblical manuscripts that inform us that their contributors were “Jacobites,” i.e. adherents of the West Syrian Church.

THREE EARLY PERSIAN BIBLICAL MANUSCRIPTS AND THEIR COLOPHONS

The earliest materials which specifically shed light on the world of PsWS are some colophons and a *colophonical* note in three manuscripts. For our study, these materials will be addressed in chronological order. After a short entry on each manuscript, details of significance in the colophons of the corresponding manuscript will

¹⁷ Ibidem, 125.

¹⁸ In 1295, Ghazan Khan converted to Islam. Some years later, his brother, Uljaytu, also converted from Christianity to Buddhism and then from Buddhism to Islam. Uljaytu’s son and successor, Abu Sa’id (d. 1335), who was the last Ilkhan of Persia, lived as a Muslim.

¹⁹ Fernando Cardinal Filoni, *The Church in Iraq*, tr. Edward Condon (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America, 2017), 33.

²⁰ As it was mentioned in some paragraphs before, the four gospels were translated into Persian in this year.

²¹ About King Tahmasp’s attitude towards Christians see Chloë Houston, “The Prospect of Conversion in Safavid Iran,” in *The Turn of the Soul: Representations of Religious Conversion in Early Modern Art and Literature*, ed. Lieke Stelling et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 92; Abbas Amanat, *Iran: A Modern History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), 67–8. King Tahmasp will be referred to in one of the colophons under consideration.

be underlined. The significance of these details in every single colophon will not be analyzed. Instead, the underlined details will be used for a concluding classification based on some deterministic rubrics. Subsequently, the achieved rubrics will define the spectrum of further investigations for a scholarship to come, which can be done by the means of these details.

Poc. 241, the Bodleian Library, Oxford – UK

Manuscript Pococke 241, often Poc. 241 in scholarship, contains a relatively long prologue, a detailed table of contents, the four gospels, and four colophons that are placed at the end of each gospel. The colophons mainly include information about the actual copying. The last colophon, placed after the Gospel of John, includes more information about the scribe and the commissioner of the copying. Being about and written by a Catholic scribe, the colophons of this manuscript will not be studied in this research dedicated to PsWS.²²

The gospels in this manuscript were translated from the *Peshitta*. Poc. 241 was copied in 1341 in the city of Kaffa (or Caffa), the modern port of Feodosia on the shore of the Black Sea on the Crimean Peninsula in modern occupied Ukraine. It was copied by Shīmūn ibn Yūsuf ibn Ibrāhīm, a Catholic scribe. Edward Pococke (d. 1691), an English theologian and orientalist, bought the manuscript in Aleppo and brought it to the UK. In 1654, Shīmūn's copy was used in the London Polyglot Bible.

The prologue of Poc. 241 consists of ten short chapters. The first eight chapters contain a theological treatise and some sentences regarding the motivation of the translator for this translation. Chapters nine and ten include a *colophonical* note, in which the name of the author of the prologue, who is also the translator of the gospels, the place of his stay, and a declaration of his intention for this commitment are recorded. There, he presented himself as Yūḥannā ibn al-qass Yūsuf al-Ya'qūbī, a residence of the city of Tbilisi. Allegedly, he is the first person who translated the gospels into [New] Persian in 1220.²³

²² See also: Eduard Sachau, Hermann Ethé, *Catalogue of the Persian, Turkish, Hindustani and Pushtu Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library, part 1: The Persian Manuscripts* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1889), 1053–4.

²³ See Fathi, *D'Orient à l'Orient*, 84. Yūḥannā ibn al-qass Yūsuf al-Ya'qūbī (al-Tiflīsī) should not be confused with Yūḥannā ibn al-qass Yūsuf al-Miāfāraqānī, who also translated the gospels from Syriac into Persian and Arabic. According to the colophon of MS 25 in the Fatih collection of the Süleymanye Library in Istanbul, Yūḥannā ibn al-qass Yūsuf al-Miāfāraqānī, known as Shams al-Ma'ānī, accomplished his bilingual Arabic-Persian translation out of Syriac in 725 AH in Tabriz. The latter manuscript, which seems to have escaped scholars' attention, is an interesting copy that deserves to be considered for further investigation in various topics, e.g. trilingualism at the time and in the place, dissemination of the gospels in Persian and Arabic, and the placement of the *pericope adulterae* in the Gospel of John, which once

In his note, Yūḥannā ibn Yūsuf emphasized the growing diffusion of Persian literature (which was mainly composed by Muslims) among his coreligionists in Tbilisi. Departing from his description, the outreach of the Persian language happened as a consequence of the increasing importance of Persian in two fields: literature, and commerce. In a part of his note he wrote:

The reason behind the writing of the gospel in Persian was so that this servant, Yūḥannā ibn al-qass Yūsuf al-Ya'qūbī saw that all people are occupied with their business and commerce, and pursue positions. They use the Persian language for their earthly life. They spend their time, learning rough poems, and unpleasant words and stories, those which are entirely falsehood, darkness, and lie; and the people are occupied with and proud of that. They neglect the gospel and the books which lead to eternal life. [...] I made this prologue and wrote the four gospels in Persian.

Unfortunately, the colophon of the original translation of Yūḥannā ibn Yūsuf did not reach us. The copyist of Poc. 241 copied the prologue, including what Yūḥannā ibn Yūsuf wrote about himself, but did not copy the colophon of his *Vorlage*. Yet, the above-mentioned colophonical note in the prologue encapsulates important information regarding the impact of cultural and economical factors on the PsWS communities in Tbilisi of the time (1220).

MS 5178, the Majlis Library, Tehran – Iran

This manuscript includes one of the earliest extant Persian Christian translations of a number of the books of the Hebrew Bible, or التورات “the Torah,” as is called in the text.²⁴ The translation and the writing were done by one person, who dated the colophon with the Islamic year 747 AH, which corresponds to 1348 CE. The books of the Hebrew Bible were translated from Arabic into Persian.²⁵ Each book ends with a short colophon, but there is a longer and more detailed colophon at the end of the manuscript. While the main text is a Persian translation, and therefore should be intended for a Persian-speaking readership, the entire table of contents, the colophons, and the following prayers and devotional expressions are in Arabic.

was placed after John 3:26 in this manuscript but was scratched out and included after John 7:53.

²⁴ For this manuscript see Mostafa Derayati, *Union Catalog of Iran Manuscripts*, vol. 9 (Tehran: NLAI, 2012), 462. Another related manuscript, written by the hand of the translator of MS 5178, is MS 26 in the Fatih collection of the Süleymanye Library, Istanbul, accomplished in 746 AH in Tabriz. The colophons in this manuscript deliver almost the same information as in the manuscript in Tehran. In the Fatih manuscript, however, the final colophon is lost. There might be further related manuscripts in Istanbul.

²⁵ It is imaginable that the books were translated from an Arabic version of the *Peshitta* Old Testament. The text deserves to be studied in this regard.

Some folios of the manuscript are lost and some of them have lost their original order in the current binding.²⁶

MS 5178 has some marginal notes but two of them are particularly important: One of them states that the manuscript was once in the possession of a Jew. The other one is a “correction,” done by a Muslim. On the margin of a folio, in front of Exodus 32:1–4, a reader commented that who melted the golden calf was not Hārūn “Aaron,” as it appears in the text, but Sāmīrī “the Samaritan,” who is a Qur’anic figure. The commentator also lightly scratched out the name of Aaron in these verses. These two notes are important because they show that the codex was not exclusively read by Christians.

The colophons of MS 5178 are formulated differently and appear in a variety of lengths and layouts. Their original order is disturbed in the current binding. Sometimes they overlap each other in terms of information that they provide. An overview of them is given here:

The first short colophon states that the accomplished book is “the fourth book of the Torah.” The translator, who is also the scribe of the text, glorifies God and appeals to his mercy and forgiveness.

The second colophon indicates the name of the book: “The Book of Judges of Israel.” Moreover, the scribe prays God’s mercy for the readers who look for mistakes in the text and correct them.

The third colophon, written after the book of Samuel, does not include the name of the book but states that it was translated from Arabic into Persian.

The fourth colophon, enclosed in a red upside-down triangular frame, presents its preceding text as the book of Joshua the son of Nun. Apart from asking mercy and forgiveness for himself and his parents, the scribe has added his name in this colophon. He is Sulaymān ibn al-qass Yūsuf al-Ya‘qūbī al-Miāfāraqānī. The city of Miāfāraqān, often recorded in English-speaking scholarship as Mayyafariqin, is the old name of the modern-day city of Silvan in Turkey, located to the south of the Anatolian plateau.²⁷

In the fifth colophon, the scribe again mentioned his name but added that he wrote the text “according to the tradition of the Holy Orthodox Church *lil-millat al-muntakhab al-afrañjia* “for the chosen Roman nation” of the safeguarded Tabriz.”²⁸

²⁶ See Muhammad Taqi Danishpazhuh, “Tarjuma-yi fārsī-i shishṣad-sāla-yi Tawrāt,” *Rāhnamā-yi kitab*, No. 7 (1962): 590.

²⁷ The presence of West Syrians in this city is attested. See R. Stephen Humphreys, “Adapting to Muslim Rule: the Syrian Orthodox Community in Twelfth-Century Northern Syria and the Jazira,” in *Syria in Crusader Times: Conflict and Coexistence*, ed. Carole Hillenbrand (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020), 69.

²⁸ The adjective *afrañjī*, written in a variety of orthographies in Persian and Arabic, is commonly translated as “European” or “Western” in current scholarship. In this phrase, however, “Roman,” meaning “Roman Catholic Christian,” is a better match for the context. On the term *afrañjī* and its application see Lyle Campbell, *Historical Linguistics: An Introduction*

The scribe recorded the month of the accomplishment of this book in three calendric systems: *Rabīʿ al-awwal* according to the Islamic calendar, *Āb* according to the Syriac calendar, and *al-Yūānī* according to the Roman calendar. The colophon also includes the name of a certain ʿAbd al-Masāl as another contributor to the text of the manuscript, who seemingly proofread it. Below the colophon, an incomplete list of the months of *Faranj* “Rome,” “the Catholic world” and their holy days which are dedicated to the saints of the Roman Church is added.²⁹

The sixth colophon includes the name of the scribe and the language of the original work as was previously mentioned. The scribe demands God’s mercy for those who would read and correct the mistakes in the text, as well as for himself.

The seventh colophon, which is the last short one, follows some short prayers in Arabic. It does not include the name of the book. Instead, it states that the text is written *bi-rasm il-bayʿat al-muqaddasa al-urtāduksiya ... al-masiḥia al-afrañjīya li-jamāʿat al-Barāpūshiya li-maḥrūsa Tabriz* “according to the tradition of the Holy Orthodox Church of ... of the Roman Christian for the *Barāpūshia* community of the safeguarded Tabriz.” The place of the ellipsis, being written on the folded corner of the folio, is not readable in the available reproduction of the manuscript.³⁰ This colophon is followed by a table of contents, which includes the title of a number of the books of the Hebrew Bible in this manuscript, written in Arabic.

The concluding colophon is placed below the table and is separated from it with the word *najjazat* “accomplished,” in which the letter ت is extremely extended. This colophon is justified in the familiar upside-down triangular layout. According to the colophon, the translation and writing of the text were done by

(Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2020), 273; Abbas Amanat, “Introduction,” in *Is There a Middle East?: The Evolution of a Geopolitical Concept*, ed. Michael E. Bonine et al. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012), 3; John Tolan, “Constructing Christendom,” in *The Making of Europe: Essays in Honour of Robert Bartlett*, ed. John Hudson, Sally Crumplin (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 285–92. For further reading: Daniel G. König, *Arabic-Islamic Views of the Latin West: Tracing the Emergence of Medieval Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

²⁹ The title of this addition is *tadhkirat.i shuhūr al-faranj wa ayyāmahum al-kibār bi-ḥisāb al-shams* “a tract on the months of Rome and their holidays according to the solar calculation.” The names of the mentioned months and the names of the holidays are those of the Roman Catholic Church.

³⁰ A careful operation of the folded folio may reveal what is written there. The unread phrase, represented here with the ellipsis, seems to be *al-mamlakat* “the kingdom,” “the realm.” This hypothetical reconstruction is relatively close to what can be read in the fifth short colophon, as was mentioned above. Muhammad Taqī Danishpazhuh, who flicked through the manuscript, read here *الملكيه المباركه al-Milkia al-mubāraka* “the blessed Melkite [?],” but placed his reading between parentheses as a sign of uncertainty, and added that the text is rubbed off in this place. His reading, although unsure, is important for this study which aims to focus on West Syrians and their world. Danishpazhouh’s reading would suggest that the “Jacobite” translator and scribe was affiliated with the Melkite Orthodox Church. See Danishpazhuh, *Tarjuma-yi fārsī*, 593.

Sulaymān ibn al-qass Yūsuf al-Ya‘qūbī al-Miāfāraqānī, a residence of Tabriz in the month of *Rajab* of the year 747 (AH, i.e. 1348 CE). The colophon also witnesses the contribution of a certain clergyman in Tabriz, whose name is not readable anymore but his epithet reads *al-Būrbūsh* or *al-Būrpūsh*,³¹ and is presented as a *rabbān* of the *bay‘at al-Afranj bi-rasm-i bay‘at-i Būrbūshīa* “the Roman Church according to the tradition of the church of *Būrbūshīa* (or *Būrpūshīa*).”³²

This colophon has some more details on its lower and marginal sides. Having words rubbed off, these details are not sufficiently legible anymore. After the colophon, there are prayers in Arabic, written by the hand of the scribe of the manuscript. Below the Arabic prayers, there is a Persian translation of the Hail Mary Prayer which, being remained as an inconspicuous impact on the folio, may not come to sight at the first glance.³³

Or. 81, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Florence – Italy

Or. 81 is a 16th-century manuscript, copied from a lost original, which was composed sometime after the Mongolian invasion of Persia during the thirteenth century. Its main body contains the text of the so-called Persian Harmony of the gospels. This generally consented naming is more precise than the previous one, “the Persian Diatessaron,” but still does not entirely reflect the content of the main body of the text of this manuscript. Despite that, let us continue to call it “the Persian Harmony,” in this paper.³⁴

³¹ Or *al-Būrpūsh* [?]. The term has not been identified. It might be a literal translation of “the red-robe,” as a reference to a group of Catholic monks, into Persian with the Arabic definite article.

³² The Syriac term ܪܒܢ *raban* literally means “our master.” Monks, abbots and sometimes priests are also called so in Syriac, Arabic and Persian Christian jargons.

³³ The name of the writer and the date of the writing of the prayer is not available. The change of the language and of the color of the ink suggest that the prayer was added later. The last line of the prayer provides a *terminus post quem* of the sixteenth century for this devotional addition. This line reads “O [...] Mary, intercede for us. Amen,” which is according to the Catholic extension of the prayer in the sixteenth century. About this extension see John D. Miller, *Beads and Prayers: The Rosary in History and Devotion* (London: Burns & Oates, 2002), 52–3. The phrase may also function as a *terminus ante quem* for the prayer, since the council of Trent in 1568 extended it, adding “now and at the hour of our death. Amen!” This addition does not appear in the Persian prayer. It might also be that the Catechism of the council reached Persian-speaking communities some years later. See *ibidem*, 53. I profited from the knowledge of Ephrem Ishac on the historical development of this prayer in the Catholic Church.

³⁴ The main body of the text includes several exegetical comments on the gospels' passages as well. Further details on this text will be available in my forthcoming article, *Markus 16 in the Persian Harmony of the Gospels*.

There are, at least, three other copies that contain a text similar to the text of Or. 81.³⁵ They are Or. 399 in the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, MS 14437 in the National Library and Archive in Tehran, and MS 110, housed in Bonifaz Kloster in Andechs, Munich.³⁶

Manuscript Or. 81 as a whole contains considerable parts. It begins with a prologue which is partially very similar to the prologue of Poc. 241.³⁷ This prologue existed in the lost original Persian *Vorlage* of Or. 81. Probably, its writer copied it from the prologue of the *Vorlage* of Poc. 241, but modified that part in which Yūḥannā ibn Yūsuf presents himself and his motivation. In the prologue of Or. 81, the name of the writer of the prologue who is also the translator and composer of the main body of the text is not mentioned. We know from the prologues in MS 14437 and MS 110 that his name was Yaḥyā ibn ʿAwaḍ al-Tabrīzī al-Armanī. At the end of the prologue in Or. 81, however, he wrote some words about his travel from Tabriz to Mazandaran and then to “the monastery of martyrs of Mar Sargis” and “the holy monastery of Sanābād” close to Hirat in modern Afghanistan,³⁸ adding also some sentences about his motivation behind the work. Since the denomination of this individual was not specified to be “Jacobite” in the text, his words will not be studied in this paper.

The main body of the text begins after the prologue. It includes a *mixture* of the four gospels. Some exegetical comments are placed after certain verses or pericopes. The reading of the verses reflects the reading of the *Peshitta* as well as the

³⁵ The relationship between these copies has not sufficiently been studied yet. Some claims on the textual relationship between the versions from Florence and Tehran are expressed in this book: Carina Jahani et al., *A Unified Gospel in Persian: An Old Variant of the Gospels along with Exegetical Comments* (Uppsala: University of Uppsala, 2018).

³⁶ This manuscript was mentioned in Dennis Halft’s PhD dissertation for the first time. In the dissertation, it is referred to with the shelf mark Rehm. 110. See page 33 of the pdf file of the dissertation in Dennis Halft, “The Arabic Vulgate in Safavid Persia: Arabic Printing of the Gospels, Catholic Missionaries, and the Rise of Shīʿī Anti-Christian Polemics,” https://refubium.fu-berlin.de/bitstream/handle/fub188/1332/Halft_diss.pdf?sequence=1. I learned about the actual shelf mark of this codex thanks to Carsten Walbiner, the contact person of the archive in Andechs. In my research on this manuscript and the other one in Tehran, I profited from suggestions made by Dennis Halft OP.

³⁷ It was mentioned that the prologue of Poc. 241 consists of a theological treatise as well as some sentences about the author himself. The prologue of Or. 81 includes the same treatise but a different vita for the author, which differs from what is available in Poc. 241’s prologue. Likely, the person behind Or. 81’s prologue copied it from Poc. 241’s author’s prologue but modified it, adding some words about himself and his own life.

³⁸ For further readings about the presence of Syrian Orthodox Communities in this area see Ian Gilman, Hans-Joachim Klimkeit, *Christians in Asia before 1500* (London: Routledge, 1999), 242.

Old Syriac versions,³⁹ and the comments resemble St. Ephrem's exegetical remarks, expressed in his poetical language.

The scribe of Or. 81 included his name at the end of the prologue. He is Qass Ibrāhīm ibn Shammās 'Abd Allāh al-Ḥiṣnkayfī. He also added some personal information about himself regarding his poor health conditions and his deprived physical capability. He requested his readers to pray and ask for God's forgiveness for him.

At the end of the text, after the main body, there are some colophons. The first colophon regards the copying of the available manuscript and includes some graphical elements. The first line of the colophon consists of one word: *tamām* "finished," "accomplished," extended across the width of the folio. There, the scribe presented himself again but this time in a longer version: Qass Ibrāhīm ibn Shammās 'Abd Allāh al-Ḥiṣnkayfī al-Masiḥī al-Suryānī al-Ya'qūbī. He copied the text in Ḥiṣnkayf, on Monday 21st of *Tishrīn II* of the year "6973 of our father Adam, 1859 of Alexander the Greek, 1550 of the birth of Christ, 1518 of the ascension of Christ, and on Monday 8th of *Shawwāl al-Mubārak* of 954 AH,"⁴⁰ for a certain *qāṭūliqūs* "catholicos" Stephanus from the city of Salāmast,⁴¹ the son of Qūlī the goldsmith, his mother, and his brothers. Again, as he did at the end of the prologue, informing his readers about his worsening health conditions, he invoked the readers to pray for him. He excused himself from potential errors in his copying and asked his readers for forgiveness, but also for the correction of the text.

Strangely, after a blank space, the scribe added his *laqab-i ta'rif* "identification title" and *ism-i 'imāda* "baptismal name" in two 7x7 squares.⁴² His identification

³⁹ The Syriac *Vorlage* of Or. 81 is an unknown text-type with remarkable commonalities with the Old Syriac gospels as well as the *Peshitta*. For instance, similar to *Codex Curetonianus*, the text of Or. 81 does not represent Joseph and Mary in a marital relationship. Similar to the *Peshitta*, however, it includes Mark 9:44 and 9:46, which are absent in the Sinaitic Palimpsest.

⁴⁰ This date, which should be the exact date of the accomplishment of the copy, corresponds to Nov. 20, 1547 in the Julian calendar, which was used until 1582. The colophon, however, indicates the date of the accomplishment of the work to be 1550 from the birth of Christ. Did the scribe confuse the year with the year of Jesus' manifestation to the Magi, which according to some traditions did not happen immediately on Jesus' birthday but after two years? The difference between 1550 and 1547 is not exactly two years, either. Moreover, it is interesting that the difference between Jesus' birth and his ascension was 32 years in the scribe's calculation, which differs from the tradition of 33 years. Some later Syriac manuscripts include a variety of dating systems in their colophon, similar to what is available in Or. 81's colophon. An example copied in Kerala in 1734 is Syr. e. 6 preserved in the Bodleian Library, dated based on the year "of Adam," "of the Greeks," and "of the Nativity of Christ." See Van der Ploeg, *The Christians*, 226.

⁴¹ It is the city of Salmās in the northwest modern Iran.

⁴² It is not clear what did exactly the scribe mean with *laqab-i ta'rif*. The suggested translation in this paper, "identification title," is rather a literal translation of the phrase, but may

name can be deciphered as ‘Izz al-Dīn and his baptismal name as Īwānīs.⁴³ Apart from the oddness of this arrangement, it is strange that these names in the squares do not coincide with those shared after the prologue and in the body of the colophon.⁴⁴ The squares are arranged as below:

س	ي	ن	ا	ن	ي	س
ي	ن	ا	و	ا	ن	ي
ن	ا	و	ي	و	ا	ن
ا	و	ي	ا	ي	و	ا
ن	ا	و	ي	و	ا	ن
ي	ن	ا	و	ا	ن	ي
س	ي	ن	ا	ن	ي	س

ن	ي	د	ل	د	ي	ن
ي	د	ل	ا	ل	د	ي
د	ل	ا	ز	ا	ل	د
ل	ا	ز	ع	ز	ا	ل
د	ل	ا	ز	ا	ل	د
ي	د	ل	ا	ل	د	ي
ن	ي	د	ل	د	ي	ن

This colophon with its squares is followed by two further shorter colophons which are separated from each other by horizontal lines, providing some supplementary information. The first one captures the geopolitical scene of the time, emphasizing that the book was accomplished at the time of Sultan Sulaymān, king of the capital city of Qusṭanṭāniya “Constantinople,” i.e. Istanbul, and Shāh Ṭahmās, king of the throne of Tabriz, in 954 AH. In his phraseology, the scribe paid glorious tributes to the Ottoman monarch, calling him the righteous king and the great Sultan of lands and seas, but did not do so for the Safavid king. The next colophon presents the name of an ecclesiastical contributor. This colophon states that this gospel was performed and preordained by the *ijtihād* “effort” of the pious father Antonius Anton *ibiskābūs* “episcopus” from Ḥiṣṅkayf.

COLOPHONS AS WINDOWS INTO THE WORLD OF PsWS

The presented colophons (and the colophonical note) provide valuable information about PsWS in a variety of topics. Some of them are addressed here:

not reflect its socio-cultural connotation. Moreover, although the scribe attributed these names to himself in the colophon, Messina claimed that these names in the squares should be considered as the translator’s name and not the scribe’s one. Messina, claiming that the scribe committed an orthographical error in writing ا instead of ل in one of the cells of the right square, argued that this name could not be the name of the scribe, because one does not write his own name erroneously. See Messina, *Notizia*, 38–9.

⁴³ Messina deciphered these squares for the first time. See Messina, *Notizia*, 38.

⁴⁴ As previously mentioned, Messina claimed that these names should belong to the translator of the text of Or. 81. See *ibidem*, 38.

- The colophons contain titles of clergy members, e.g. qass “priest,” shammās “deacon,” etc. They serve to know about the structure of the church of their respective communities. They also are of help to know to what extent these titles were similar to those known from Syriac-speaking or Arabic-speaking communities.

- The colophons inform us who in the community would take care of the translation or copying of the scripture. As it has been seen in the studied cases, such tasks were overtaken by priests or the sons of priests or deacons. Probably, there was no scribe guild or translator guild out of the church and as a lay profession in the communities in which these colophons were composed.

- The colophons are informative regarding the role of the Arabic language in the literature of PsWS communities. The observed colophons are composed in different levels of Arabicism. The minor cases of Arabicism can be recognized in Poc. 241 and Or. 81, where we find terms such as *ibn* “the son of” or the definite article *al* in the name of the individuals. The major case is MS 5178 in which all colophons are entirely written in Arabic. Although detecting Arabicism in premodern Persian literature, which was mainly dominated by Muslim authors, is not an unexpected finding, it is significant here to notice that these colophons were not written by Persian-speaking Muslims.

- Including the names of the cities in which the studied manuscripts were translated or copied, these colophons are of great help to map the geography of PsWS communities. Toponymic surnames of the translators and scribes, e.g. al-Miāfāraqānī, al-Ḥiṣṅkayfī, etc., should be considered for any geographical mapping of these communities as well. Moreover, the colophons provide an idea about the significance of some geographical places for the communities in terms of their centrality or marginality. For instance, the observed cases leave no doubt regarding the prominent centrality of Tabriz in comparison with other mentioned toponyms.

- The increasing presence of the Roman Church in the region at the time is already known from several sources. The same sources are also informative regarding the interest of the Catholics to proselytize local Christians. The studied colophons make it feasible to have a closer look at the impact of the Roman Church on PsWS.

- The observed colophons suggest imagining the lack of a standard and consistent pattern and the absence of monotony in terms of using a single calendric system, as well as the increasing popularity of the Roman months and year numbers among PsWS of the time. The cases boldly show the cultural plurality of the environment in which PsWS found themselves.

- As can be seen in the observed cases, it was not infrequent for PsWS to identify themselves as “Jacobites.” Other identity demarcations such as the profession, the name of the father, the profession of the father, the name of the residence or birthplace, the name of the religion, and the name of the denomination are recognizable in the names of the individuals in the colophons under consideration. An example is the case of Qass Ibrāhim ibn Shammās ‘Abd Allāh al-Ḥiṣṅkayfī al-Masiḥī al-Suryānī al-Ya‘qūbī. In this case, it is particularly remarkable to observe in which order different segments of this self-identification are arranged.

- The colophons shed light on the spirituality of PsWS. Translators and scribes made use of colophons as platforms to express their devotion and to receive divine attention. As it was seen in MS 5178 and Or. 81, the scribes asked for forgiveness. Considering the shortage of Persian Christian materials, colophons are valuable sources of information for the question of the spirituality of PsWS.

- Different graphical technics and layouts were used in the colophons. In the latter cases, the final colophons of the studied manuscripts are separated from the main body by including a word for “accomplished” with an extremely long horizontal stroke in their first line. This visual technic could clearly and efficiently demarcate the end of the main text and the beginning of the colophon. Moreover, two common justifications of the colophons of Persian manuscripts, the simple and the upside-down triangular layout, were used in the studied examples. Further graphical elements could appear in colophons as well, a good instance of which being two 7x7 squares in the last manuscript.

- The colophons provide valuable insight into the transmission of texts. They inform us about the *Vorlagen* of their manuscripts, and sometimes about the modification of the *Vorlagen* in the copies. In MS 5178, it could also be seen how the message of the scribe in the colophon could potentially cause the modification of the text of the manuscript by its readers. The scribe stimulated readers to “correct” the text. It was also mentioned that that very manuscript was read not only by Christians but also by Jews and Muslims. The call of the scribe for “correction” could be complied by readers from different perspectives. The next scribe could keep the “corrections” inside his copy and take out the original words of his *Vorlage*.

- Colophons shed light on socio-cultural conditions in which PsWS found themselves. For instance, the colophonical note at the end of the prologue of Poc. 241 shows how and why the language of the community was changing and why a Persian translation of the gospels was needed. The note also shows *what* was needed. The translator focused on the gospels and not other biblical or liturgical materials. In another case, the colophon of Or. 81 is of help to know what could be the profession of a layman in a PsWS community. The manuscript was written for the catholicos of the city of Salāmast, who was the son of a goldsmith.

- Colophons may provide information about the political situation of the time, at which they are penned. The last studied colophon has saved the political viewpoint of a Persian-speaking Christian at a time in which his homeland was at the front of the Ottoman-Safavid wars. The linking of the date of the colophon to the reign of two rival monarchs of two neighboring lands depicts the geopolitical tension of the world in which the scribe was living. Moreover, the applied phraseology may indicate which monarch was preferred to the other one by the scribe, as was the case in the colophon written in Hışnıyaf of the mid-sixteenth century.

CONCLUSION

Over and above everything, the observed colophons inform us about the *existence* of Persian-speaking adherents of the West Syrian Church in the thirteenth-sixteenth

centuries. It may not sound to be an exciting discovery, but considering the scarcity of our knowledge about this linguistically distinct community, this statement is not overestimated.

In a further step, small portions of information scattered in the colophons are of help to develop our acquaintance with PsWS and their world. These colophons are more than records of names and dates. They encapsulate information about a wide spectrum of rubrics related to a variety of aspects of the culture and life of these lesser-known Christians. They provide unique materials for micro-level approaches toward a wide range of topics such as ecclesiastical terminology, scribal traditions, Arabicism among the PsWS scribes, the geography of the communities, the impact of Catholicism, calendrical systems, self-identification, layouts of colophons, spirituality, the transmission of texts, socio-cultural conditions, the political situation, etc. They provide a cornerstone for further studies on the question of the Persian-speaking adherents of the West Syrian Church and the world in which they dwelled.

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APPENDIX: THE THREE STUDIED MANUSCRIPTS IN ONE VIEW

Shelf Mark	Repository	Date of Translation	Translator	Date of Copying	Copyist
Poc. 241	Bodleian Library, Oxford	1220	Yūḥannā ibn Yūsuf al-Ya‘qūbī al-Tiflīsī	1341	Shimūn ibn Yūsuf ibn Ibrāhīm
MS 5178	Majlis Library, Tehran	1348	Sulaymān ibn Yūsuf al-Ya‘qūbī al-Miāfāraqānī	1348	Sulaymān ibn Yūsuf al-Ya‘qūbī al-Miāfāraqānī
Or. 81	Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Florence	13 th –14 th century	Yaḥyā ibn ‘Awaḍ al-Tabrīzī al-Armanī	1547–1550	Ibrāhīm ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Ḥiṣṅkayfī al-Ya‘qūbī

TIMES OF DISINTEGRATION AND CALAMITIES: AZHAR AND HIS MYSTERIOUS COLOPHONS

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In Persian calligraphy, one of the most significant figures in the development of *nasta'liq* script in the 15th century was Maulana Azhar, a prolific scribe who started his professional career at the beginning of the 1430s under the patronage of the Timurid Prince Baysunghur in Herat. By his final years around 1475, he had copied numerous manuscripts under various patrons.

This essay looks at Azhar's career and professional life in a period of around 50 years.¹ After a survey of his works through decades and at different courts, it discusses his diverging signatures and concentrates, in particular, on one of his beautiful manuscripts, the *Khusrau u Shirin* of Nizami Ganjavi from his mature years. Despite the colophon presenting a forged date, the scribe's descriptive note about the turbulent time of copying helps identify the real date of the manuscript on the basis of historical evidence.

INTRODUCTION

The rich tradition of manuscript production in Herat under the Timurids (1370–1507) in 15th-century Iran was predominantly built upon the artistic legacy of the Jalayirids (1335–1432), who ruled Western Persia with their centres of power mainly based in Baghdad and Tabriz.² It also partly inherited models from the productions of Iskandar Sultan's prolific royal libraries in Shiraz and Isfahan. Iskandar, son of 'Umar Shaykh, son of Timur was dismissed from power by his uncle

¹ I am grateful to the Bodleian Library, Oxford University, for granting me the Bahari Visiting Fellowship in 2020 to study the *Kulliyat* of 'Imad al-Din Faqih Kirmani (Elliott 210) and completing my research on Azhar. My special thanks go to Dr. Alexandra Franklin and Mr. Alasdair Watson for their kind help throughout my fellowship.

² The Jalayirid history is exhaustively studied by Patrick Wing in his monograph: Wing, P. *The Jalayirids: Dynastic State Formation in the Mongol Middle East* (Edinburgh, 2016).

Shahrukh (r. 1405–1447), who moved Iskandar's 'treasures' along with some of his artists to the capital Herat, after his nephew's death. This helped making Herat a cradle of cultural activity for the remainder of the century.³

The art of the book continued to develop under Shahrukh's son and heir apparent, Prince Baysunghur (1397–1433), by whom the Herat school of art was initiated and perfected. His royal atelier and library were established in his residential palace *Bagh-i Safid* (White Garden) in Herat around 1420 and remained active until a few years after his premature death at the age of 35. During this period, the newly formed Persian calligraphy script, *nasta'liq*, became very popular and evolved by calligraphy masters, such as Ja'far Tabrizi, the head of Prince Baysunghur's library, and his tutelage lineage: Maulana Azhar, Shaykh Maḥmud and their descendants.

This study is an attempt to glean the sporadic information on Azhar's life and works from various sources, including accounts of him in primary literature as well as the colophons of manuscripts penned by or ascribed to him. There is a cloud of uncertainty around several colophons naming him as the scribe, which require settling and discussion of the evidence. One manuscript in his hand, in particular, carries an altered date which is redeemable based on the colophon's wording, where Azhar briefly explains the reason for the delay in the work's completion.

AZHAR: LIFE AND WORKS

Azhar Haravi or Tabrizi (fl. 833–880/1430–1475) was a prominent calligrapher who served multiple patrons and played a significant role in the establishment and evolution of the *nasta'liq* script in the 15th century.⁴ He began his career as a pupil under the famous calligraphy master Ja'far Tabrizi (fl. 1413–1434) at the atelier of the bibliophile Prince Baysunghur.⁵

³ Previously, Timur had moved artists, clerics, musicians, scholars, etc. to his capital Samarkand in order to turn it into the most glorious cultural centre in his realm. After Timur's death in 1405, some of them followed the transference of the capital and moved to Herat to continue their activities under the new patronage.

⁴ Some biographers believed he was from Tabriz, including Ibn Karbala'i, M.H. *Rauzāt al-Jinān*, ed. J. Sultan al-Qarā'i (Tehran, 1344/1965): 1/371, and 'Ali Efendi, M. *Manāqib-i Hunarvarān* (Istanbul, 1926): 32, but Mir 'Ali Haravi and Malik Daylami refer to him as Azhar Haravi (from Harat). Malik Daylami, the preface of Amir Ḥusayn Beg album (Topkapı Palace Library, hereafter TSK, H. 2151, f. 32v), dated 958/1560–61; translated and published in Thackston, W. *Album Prefaces and Other Documents on the History of Calligraphers and Painters* (Leiden, 2001): 20–21.

⁵ The latest dated manuscript penned by Ja'far that the author has examined is a copy of the *Makhzan al-Asrar* of Nizami (British Library [hereafter BL], Or. 11919), whose colophon indicates the year 838/1434; however, Bayani states that Ja'far was alive and active in the year 859/1455, based on his dated signature in a calligraphy specimen in Amir Ḥusayn Beg album (TSK, H. 2151). He does not specify the folio number. Bayānī, M. *Ahvāl va āthār-i khushnivīsān* (Tehran, 1363/1984): 1/118. Repeated also in Azhar's account by Simsār, M.H.

Baysunghur founded his celebrated library and atelier around 1420 and brought several artists from Tabriz, where the Jalayirid workshop was active several years before. Ja'far Tabrizi – widely known by his princely sobriquet al-Baysunghuri – was soon appointed the chief librarian and overseer of the court's artistic and architectural projects. Under his calligraphy training, Aẓhar became master of the six scripts (*aqlām-i sittā*) and one of the most eminent calligraphers of his time.⁶ Aẓhar worked for many patrons over his long life: Prince Baysunghur, his son 'Ala' al-Daula, his brothers Ulugh Beg and Ibrahim Sultan, Pir Budaq Qara Quyunlu, and the Timurid prince Sultan Abu Sa'īd b. Muḥammad b. Miranshah.⁷ Known as 'Master of the Masters', a great number of sources mention his prowess in calligraphy, without recording anything further about his life. Our limited knowledge in this regard can only be gathered by tracing his works and relying upon the information he provided in colophons.

In the manuscripts Aẓhar transcribed over his long career, he signed using various *nisbas*: Aẓhar al-Ja'fari (833H, Herat), Aẓhar al-Katib (e.g. 853, Herat), Aẓhar Tabrizi (877, Isfahan), Aẓhar al-Sulṭāni (864, Herat) and simply Aẓhar (e.g. 864, Mashhad). The earliest work in his hand is a translation of the *Maulūd al-Muṣṭafā*, widely known as the *Sīrat al-Nabī*, completed in 833/1430 (Istanbul, Nuruosmaniye Library, no. 3342). There, he signed Aẓhar al-Ja'fari. On the other hand, another student of Ja'far Tabrizi, Maḥmud – later became well known as Shaykh Maḥmud Haravi and towards the end of his career as Shaykh Maḥmud Pir Budaqi – began his career at Baysunghur's court around the same time as Aẓhar. Both of them were top students of Ja'far Tabrizi and later played a great role as master of *nasta'liq* in the progress and prevalence of the script in the 15th century. The earliest works we know of each of them are dated 833/1430 where they both signed their names with the sobriquet al-Ja'fari. Maḥmud al-Ja'fari's signature is found in a calligraphy specimen comprising six couplets of a poem by Katibi Turshizi in H. 2153, f. 161r in Topkapı Palace Library in Istanbul.⁸

Maḥmud copied an anthology of poetry in 833/1430, containing poems of great classic poets, such as 'Aṭṭar, Khaqani, Sa'di, Amir Khusrau Dihlavi as well as verses by the prince's court poets, such as Ḥafīẓ Sa'd and Amiri Shahi. This anthology, housed in the library of Astan-i Qods-i Razavi in Mashhad, no. 10399, marks the year 833/1430 as the beginning of Shaykh Maḥmud's scribal career (fig. 1).⁹

"Aẓhar Tabrizi", *Dānīshnāma-yi Buzurg-i Islāmī*, vol. 9 (Tehran, 1367/1988): 339–41.

⁶ 'Abd al-Razzāq Samarqandī, *Maṭla'ī Sa'dāyān va Majma'ī Baḥrayn*, ed. 'A. Navā'ī (Tehran, 1383/2004): 2/1:431.

⁷ Bayānī (1984/1363): 68. Bayani lists manuscripts copied by Aẓhar in *ibid.*: 68–74.

⁸ It reads کتبه شیخ محمود الجعفری عفا الله عنهما بمزار متبرک گازرگاه هراة

⁹ For a list of Shaykh Maḥmūd's works, see Seki, Y. "Shaykh Maḥmūd Haravī", *Nāma-yi Bahāristān*, 11:16 (1389/2010): 45–60. Seki missed the above-mentioned anthology, and a manuscript of the *Sad Kalima* in the Aga Khan Museum in Toronto (AKM518). An account of

We cannot be certain if it was out of respect for their calligraphy teacher, or they had reached the excellence level that Ja'far granted them the honour of being associated to his own name. In a calligraphy specimen in the TSK album H. 2154 with Aẓhar's signature, he stated that in writing letters and their compositions, he followed the method of Khwaja Amir 'Ali the canoniser of *nasta'liq* principles, and "the second inventor [of *nasta'liq*], who is my shaykh and my cynosure, Maulana Ja'far al-Tabrizi, perfection of the community and the faith. May God almighty rest his dear soul in peace!"¹⁰ Although Aẓhar followed his calligraphy teacher's style closely, his hand is clearly different from that of Ja'far. A comparison of their mastery in calligraphy is found in some *tazkiras* and historical sources expressing diverging opinions.¹¹ In *Ādāb al-mashq*, Majnun Rafiqi Haravi describes Aẓhar's hand superior to Ja'far's;¹² whereas, the master calligrapher Mir 'Ali Haravi (1476–1544) states in *Midād al-Khuṭūṭ* that the tutelage relationship and mastery level of Aẓhar to Ja'far is comparable to the skillfulness of Sayrafī to Yaqut (which makes Aẓhar's hand less masterful). He adds that although Aẓhar's hand was firmer than Ja'far's, he did not reach Ja'far in principles.¹³ Mir 'Ali Haravi compares Sultan 'Ali Mashhadi's hand with the two to conclude that Sultan 'Ali benefitted from both Ja'far's principles and Aẓhar's firmness.¹⁴ In his calligraphy treatise *Ṣirāt al-Suṭūr*, Sultan 'Ali Mashhadi names Ja'far and Aẓhar as pioneers of calligraphy and wonderous in all scripts, whom other calligraphers followed.¹⁵

Mirza Ḥaydar Dughlat (905–957/1499–1550) the author of *Tārīkh-i Rashīdī* (composed around 948–53/1541–46) has a report on the three calligraphers, which not only is very interesting, but is also helpful in deciphering an ambiguous colo-

the latter is published in Mihan, S. "Sad Kalima (One Hundred Sayings) of Ali b. Abi-Talib", Aga Khan Museum's blog, 2019.

<https://agakhanmuseum.org/collection/artifact/manuscript-sayings-scribe-sheikh-mahmud-heravi-akm518> (last accessed on 3 May 2022).

¹⁰ «مفردات و مرکبات نسخ تعلیق علی طریق واضع الاصل خواجه امیر علی تغمده الله بغفرانه و مخترع الثانی و هو شیخی و قبلتی مولانا کمال الملة و الدین جعفر التبریزی روح الله تعالی روحه العزیز. کتبه اظهر.»

¹¹ Giti Norouzian has collected historical and art historical accounts on Aẓhar in her book Naurūziyān, G. *Zahīr al-Dīn Aẓhar* (Tehran, 1398/2019): 9–12. For a comparison of their hands, see Mihan, S. *Timurid Manuscript Production: The Scholarship and Aesthetics of Prince Bāysunghur's Royal Atelier (1420–1435)* (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Cambridge, 2018): 245–251.

¹² Majnūn Rafiqi Haravi, "Ādāb al-mashq," in Māyil Havarī, N. *Kitāb-ārā'i dar tamaddun-i Islāmī* (Mashhad, 1372/2003): 214, verses 110–114.

¹³ Mir 'Ali Haravi, "Midād al-Khuṭūṭ," in *Kitāb-ārā'i* (2003): 94.

¹⁴ Sultan 'Ali (Sabz) Mashhadi was Aẓhar's most eminent pupil. His other famous pupils were 'Abd al-Raḥīm Khwarazmi and his brother 'Abd al-Karīm Khwarazmi, Sultan 'Ali Qayini, Shaykh Muḥammad Imami and his brother Ghayb Allah Imami. Thackston (2001): 21.

¹⁵ Sulṭān 'Ali Mashhadi, "Ṣirāt al-Suṭūr," in *Kitāb-ārā'i* (2003): 79.

phon.¹⁶ Aẓhar found Sultan ‘Alī Mashhadī completing a manuscript in Ja‘far’s hand and reprimanded him severely for his incompetence. “Maulana Ja‘far began transcribing a *Khamsa*, later left incomplete. Mirza Sultan Abu Sa‘id (1424–69) commanded if anyone was able to complete it. Since Maulana Sultan ‘Alī had reached popularity among people, they mentioned there was a famous young scribe, who might be able to accomplish such a challenging task. They summoned him, and presented Ja‘far’s book; he immediately accepted, transcribed a section and brought it back. Maulana Aẓhar was at his home at that time. They first presented it to him. He became enraged, asking how he dared to complete a work in Ja‘far’s hand with such principles. Aẓhar reprimanded Sultan ‘Alī, punished and locked him in for two days. After that he told him he was extremely talented but his script principles are not relevant to *nasta‘liq*, but are rather to Rumi scripts. Aẓhar gave him calligraphic models to copy and learn. Mulla Sultan ‘Alī said, “I took the model and practiced. After that, I learned the principles of *nasta‘liq* and realised that I was not aware of my lack of style; I was arrogant about the maturity, smoothness and solidity [of my hand]”.¹⁷

I have not yet come across a *Khamsa* penned by Ja‘far and Sultan ‘Alī, yet; however, one wonders, if the manuscript Mirza Dughlat referred to is the *Khamsa* (Quintet) dated 866/1461 (TSK, H. 761) with its mysterious colophon. One poem out of the five *mathnavis* is in Ja‘far’s hand. In an internal colophon on f. 200r, Shaykh Maḥmud clearly stated that the book of *Laylā and Majnūn* was copied by his teacher Maulana Ja‘far (ff. 96v–147v), and Maḥmud also replaced the prior two pages (ff. 95v–96r) that were lost. He completed three other poems of the *Khamsa*: *Makhzan al-Asrār*, *Khusrau u Shīrīn* and *Haft Paykar* in 1461. According to Maḥmud, the folios in Ja‘far’s hand had been lost during a “troubulous period” and he was now making good the loss. Dughlat’s account and Shaykh Maḥmud’s colophon wording suggest that after Sultan ‘Alī failed to gain Aẓhar’s approval to continue Ja‘far’s work, the project was not assigned to him. The next choice would have been Ja‘far’s other best pupil, Shaykh Maḥmud, who began his professional career at Baysunghur’s court at the same time as Aẓhar did, and whose hand was closest to his teacher. The first colophon of the *Khamsa* (H. 761) confirms this hypothesis. The second colophon on f. 409r reveals that the rest of the manuscript (*Iskandar-nāma*) was completed at the command of Sultan Khalil, and in the hand of Fakhr al-Din Aḥmad in 881/1476.

¹⁶ Mirzā Ḥaydar Dughlāt, *Tārīkh-i Rashīdī*, ed. ‘A. Ghaffārī Fard (Tehran, 2004 / 1383): 315–16.

¹⁷ Ibid.



Fig. 1. *Shamsa*. Anthology of poetry. 833/1430. Mashhad, Astan-i Qods-i Razavi, no. 10399, f. 1r.

Back to Azhar's early years, after completing the *Sirat al-Nabi* in 1430, he copied the *Kulliyāt* (collected works) of the fourteenth-century Persian poet 'Imad al-Din Faqih Kirmani in 834/1431. Since the former work is dedicated to a 'Shaykh Is-

ma‘il’ in its colophon, the latter is Aẓhar’s first princely-commissioned manuscript. The *Kulliyāt*, a complete collection of ‘Imad al-Din’s works, is now preserved at the Bodleian Library in Oxford (Elliott 210). Prince Baysunghur was in favour of collecting all the works of great poets and commanded several complete editions, namely a new recension of the *Shāhnāma* of Firdausi (833/1430), the *Kulliyāt* of Khwaju Kirmani (829/1426), and a project to collect all the poems of Amir Khusrau Dihlavi that remained incomplete due to his large number of verses.¹⁸ The *Sīrat al-Nabī* as Aẓhar’s earliest known work and the *Kulliyāt* of ‘Imad Faqih as his only certain Baysunghuri manuscript are probably his most significant works, to which I will return below.

SĪRAT AL-NABĪ (TR. MAULŪD AL-MUŞTAFĀ)

The early-career scribe copied the *Sīrat al-Nabī* (Nuruosmaniye Library, no. 3342) in 833/1430, which marks Aẓhar’s first known manuscript.

The *Sīrat al-Nabī* (Biography of the Prophet) is the translation of the *Maulūd al-Muṣṭafā*, a religious text on the life and virtues of the Prophet Muḥammad, written by ‘Afif al-Din Sa‘id b. Muḥammad b. Mas‘ud Kaziruni (d. 758/1357). This copy is solely adorned with rulings in gold and lapis blue, as well as gold headings and rubrics, but contains no illustrations nor elaborate illuminations. Its 259 folios are bound in an envelope flap binding of brown leather with plain gold rulings. The text of the *Sīrat al-Nabī* begins on f. 1v with a gold *bismillah* inscription on the heading, written with a large pen in a fine *thuluth*. The script is early *nasta‘liq* and the rubrics and Quranic verses are in *riqā‘* in gold or lapis blue. Other ownership signs include a *waqf* note of Sultan Osman ibn Muṣṭafa (r. 1754–1757) and his seal impression on f. 1r; the seal of Hajj Ibrahim on f. 1v; and illegible seals on 174r and 259r.¹⁹ The colophon ends with pale traces of two seals and a note that reads:

صاحبه و مالکه يوسف بک بن احمد بک بن اتاقي

Owned and possessed by Yusuf Beg b. Aḥmad Beg b. Utaqi.

¹⁸ Daulatshāh Samarqandī (1382/2004): 429–30. Amir Khusrau had stated himself that the number of his verses totaled between 400,000 and 500,000 couplets. Daulatshah reports that no sooner than they had collected 120,000 verses, 2000 verses were found elsewhere, absent from his *divans* as known up until then. At that point the prince decided to terminate the project as it proved impossible to gather all the verses by Amir Khusrau. Even so, there is evidence that they had started to produce his collected works, or at least his *qasidas*, as found in the Diez album in the State Library of Berlin, fol. 74. For the incipit and explicit verses see Pertsch, W. *Die Handschriften-Verzeichnisse der Königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin* (Berlin, 1888): 728, cat. 699a, no. 3.

¹⁹ Ḥusaynī, S.M.T. *Fihrist-i dast-nivīs-hā-yi Fārsī-yi Kitābkhāna-yi Nuruosmaniye in Istanbul* (Tehran, 1394/2015): 286–87.

The colophon imparts ambiguous information about the production provenance and the identity of the possessor of the codex. Signing his name as Aẓhar al-Jaʿfari, he stated that the manuscript was completed on 15 Rajab 833/9 April 1430 at Herat for a revered Shaykh Ismaʿil. This is the only case where he signs with the *nisba* al-Jaʿfari; however, a comparison of the calligraphic characteristics of letters and combinations of words in the text with definite works of Aẓhar leaves no doubt about the identity of the scribe. The given date coincides with the peak years of Baysunghur’s library activities, but this volume is entirely dissimilar to the profusely decorated manuscripts made for the prince’s library. The colophon implied that the *Sirat al-Nabi* was not intended to furnish the prince’s library, but was copied for alternative purposes. He expressed that his aim was to “seek closeness to the presence of the most magnificent master, and the greatest Master, educator of the scholars, and supporter of the vulnerable, distinguished by the favour of the Glorious King (God), Shaykh Ismaʿil, may Allah redouble his glory” (fig. 2).²⁰

Aẓhar’s wording raises questions concerning the identity of the commissioner and the owner of the manuscript. The identity of Shaykh Ismaʿil cannot be established with certainty and we can only speculate on the basis of the limited information extracted from the colophon. It could be surmised from the title ‘Shaykh’ that he was probably a famous mystic figure and Sufi in Herat, contemporary with Prince Baysunghur. Among homonymous figures of the same time and location mentioned in historical sources, Shaykh Ismaʿil could be the same person as Khwaja Ismaʿil Ḥiṣari, who was a well-known Sufi in Herat. As Khwandamir records in the *Maʿāthir al-Mulūk*, Khwaja Ismaʿil Ḥiṣari had a school and a *khanqah* constructed in Herat at the time of Shāhrukh.²¹ This implies that he was a benefactor, which is consistent with Aẓhar’s describing him as ‘educator of the scholars’ and the supporter of the vulnerable. Be it Ismaʿil Ḥiṣari or another Ismaʿil, he was surely an influential figure, for whom a religious text was prepared by one of the calligraphers of the royal library.

²⁰ تقرّباً إلى حضرة الخدم المعظم و الصاحب الاعظم مرّبي العلماء و مقوى الضعفاء المختصّ بعناية الملك الجليل شيخ اسمعيل ضاعف الله جلاله

²¹ Khwādamīr, *Maʿāthir al-Mulūk*, ed. M.H. Muḥaddith (Tehran, 1372/1993): 169.

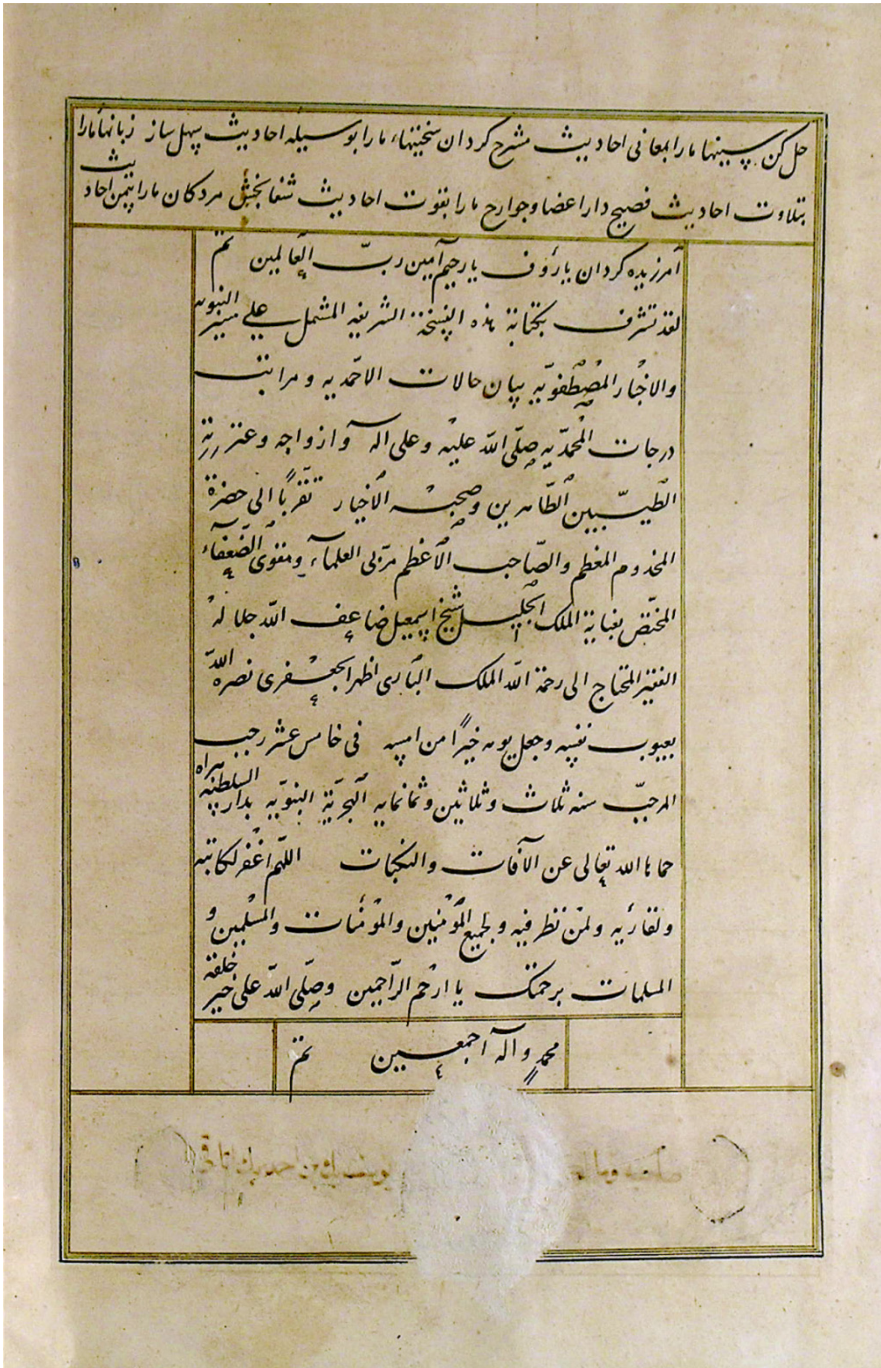


Fig 2. Colophon. *Sirat al-Nabi*. 833/1430. Istanbul, Nuruosmaniye Library, no. 3342, f.1v.

KULLIYYĀT OF ʿIMAD AL-DIN FAQĪH KIRMANI

The *Kulliyāt* of ʿImad al-Din Faqih Kirmani contains his *Divan* and five *mathnavis* known as *Panj ganj* (Five Treasures). The Baysunghuri volume (Bodleian Library, Elliott 210) comprises the following books:

1. The *Ṣafā-nāma* (also known as the *Muʿnis al-Abrār*) (ff. 1v–40r).²²
2. The *Ṣuḥbat-nāma* (ff. 40v–70r).²³
3. The *Muḥabbat-nāma-yi Sāhibdilān* (ff. 70v–98r).²⁴
4. The *Dah-nāma* (ff. 99v–120r).²⁵
5. The preface to *Ṭarīqat-nāma* (also known as the *Mubārak-nāma*) (ff. 121v–127v).²⁶
6. The main text of *Ṭarīqat-nāma* (ff. 128v–213r) (fig. 4).²⁷
7. *Qaṣīdas* and *qitʿas* (ff. 214v–249v).
8. *Ghazals* in alphabetical order (ff. 250v–390r).²⁸

In his comprehensive study of the poet, De Bruijn emphasises the importance of ʿImad al-Din for the Timurids: “Contrary to the relative oblivion that has become the fate of the works of ʿImad in later centuries, they seem to have been held in high esteem during his own lifetime and the immediately-following century.”²⁹

²² A mystical-didactic poem in three chapters, completed in 766/1364–65, dedicated to the Muzaffarid ruler, Shah Shujaʿ Kirmani (1333–1384). Historical information on Shah Shujaʿ are found in Roemer, H.R. “The Jalayirids, Muzaffarids and Sarbadars”, *Cambridge history of Iran*: vol. 6. *The Timurid and Savafid periods*, ed. P. Jackson & L. Lockhart, (Cambridge, 2008).

²³ It is on the manners of 10 different social classes, completed in 731/1330–31, dedicated to Ghiyath al-Din Muḥammad b. Rashid al-Din Faḏl Allah, the vizier of Sultan Abu Saʿid.

²⁴ The *Muḥabbat-nāma* is a collection of *munaẓaras* (debates) in eight chapters. It is ʿImad Faqih’s earliest work, completed in 722/1322 (when he was 32) and dedicated to Taj al-Din Iraqī, the Ilkhanid vizier in Iraq.

²⁵ It’s a collection of ten letters to Shah Shujaʿ and other shaykhs and sufis.

²⁶ It includes praise of the patron Amir Mubariz al-Din Muḥammad (r. 713–765/1314–1358).

²⁷ It is an adaptation in verse of the *Miṣbah al-Hidāya* of ʿIzz al-Din Maḥmud Kashani, composed when ʿImad al-Din was 40 years old. A comparative study of the original text and the verse adaptation is done by Khushḥāl Dastjirdī, T. “Muqāyisa-yi Ṭarīqat-nāma-yi ʿImad al-Din Faqih Kirmani va Miṣbah al-Hidāya ʿIzz al-Din Maḥmūd Kāshāni,” *Jāmiʿa-shināsi-i Kār-burdī*, 14 (1381): 77–100.

²⁸ More details in Ethé, H. *Catalogue of Persian manuscripts in the library of the India Office* (London, Oxford, 1903): 1: 573–75.

²⁹ De Bruijn, J.T.P. “ʿImad al-Din ʿAlī, Faqih-i Kirmani”, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edition, ed. P. Bearman *et al.* (Tehran, 2012). http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_8695 (last accessed 11 May 2022).

Azhar's next project and probably his first luxurious manuscript was transcribing the collected works of 'Imad al-Din.³⁰ This manuscript bears Prince Baysunghur's *ex libris* within an elaborately illuminated *shamsa* on f. 1r. It reads,

برسم خزانة السلطان الاعظم بايسنغر بهادر خان خلد الله ملكه

"For the book treasury of the most magnificent Sulṭān Baysunghur Bahādur Khān, may God perpetuate his kingdom".

Each work of 'Imad al-Din Faqih proceeds after an illuminated *sarlah*, carrying a *kufic* inscription (ff. 1v, 40v, 70v, 72r, 99v, 121v, 128v, 214v and 250v), except for f. 72r which bears a *thuluth* inscription.

The final colophon on f. 390r tells us the manuscript was completed on 26 Dhu'l-hijja 834/4 September 1431, but it is silent about the place of production, which was almost certainly Herat. The colophon reads,

تمت هذه الكتابة بعون الله الملك الاكبر على يد العبد الضعيف الفقير اظهر غفرالله ذنوبه و ستر عيوبه
في سادس عشر من ذى الحجة سنة اربع و ثلاثين و ثمانماية من هجرة النبوية

Here the scribe simply signed his name Azhar with no *nisba*; not unexpected for a young scribe at the outset of his professional career in the prince's court.

Azhar continued working for Prince Baysunghur until his death in 837/1433. The court poets and artists composed eulogies on the loss of their generous patron, and dedicated them to his father Shahrukh. All those poems gathered in one volume, entitled *Jung-i marāthi* (Anthology of Eulogies), was penned by Azhar in the same year (Tabriz National Library, no. 2967). The poems depict the court milieu, the workshop's interior, and the ongoing projects that had to be abandoned upon the absence of the prince.

After Baysunghur's death, Azhar continued his career under his son 'Alā' al-Daula, who inherited the prince's library and atelier and spent lavishly on artistic activities, without a masterpiece among his limited output. It was around this time that Azhar signed most of his works as Azhar al-Katib, e.g. in his calligraphy specimens and manuscripts dated from around 840 to 860/1436 to 1456. Table 1 provides a list of works in Azhar's hand or attributed to him with the patron's name, date and place if specified.

³⁰ The *Kalila u Dimna* (Golestan Palace, 2198), whose colophon is now lost, is probably another Baysunghuri manuscript copied by Azhar. See below.

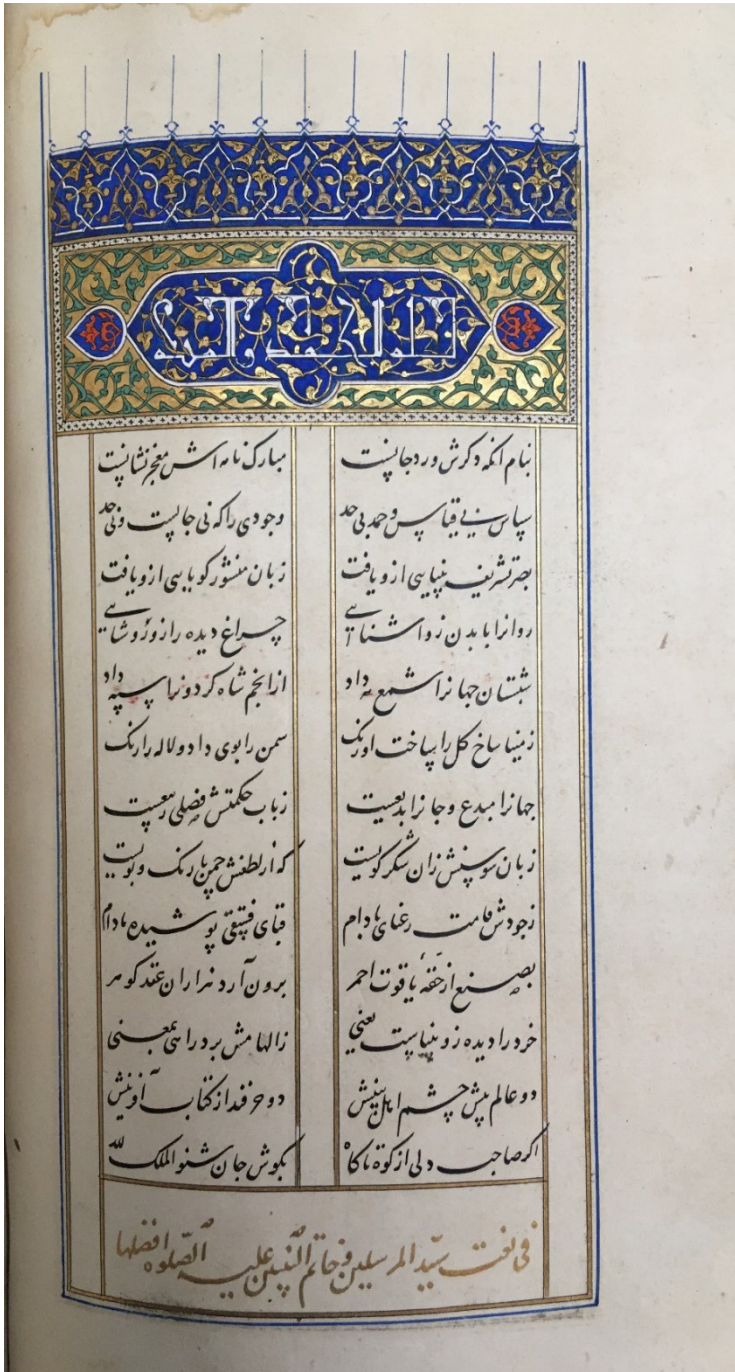


Fig. 3. *Sarlahū* of *Tarīqat-nāma*. *Kulliyat* of ‘Imad al-Din Faqih Kirmani. Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, Elliott 210, f. 121v.

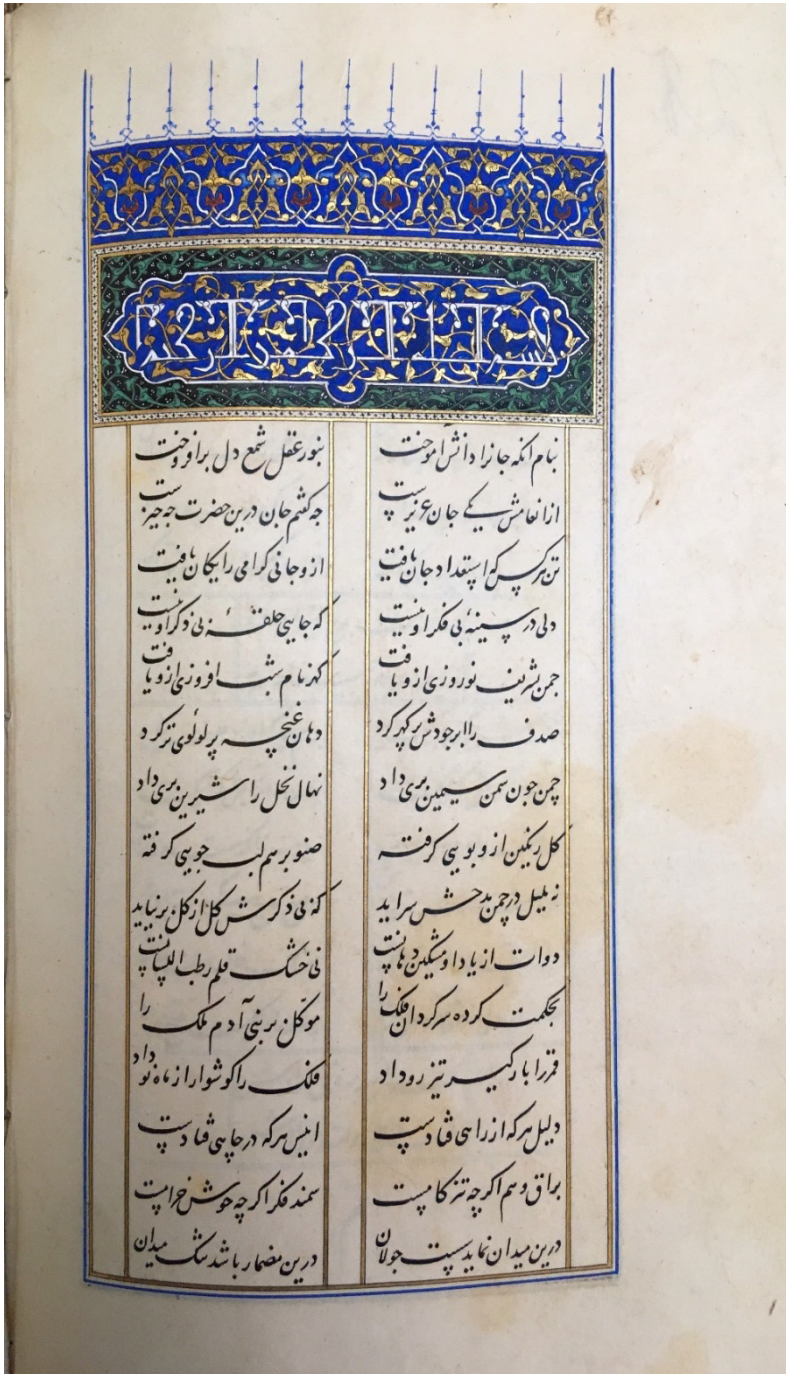


Fig. 4. Sarlawh of *Miṣbah al-Hidāya*. *Kullīyyat* of ʿImad al-Din Faqih Kirmani. Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, Elliott 210, f. 128v

Table 1. Manuscripts associated with Aẓhar in chronological order

Title	Signature	Date & Place	Location
(Tr.) <i>Maulūd al-Muṣṭafā</i> (for Shaykh Isma‘il)	Aẓhar al-Ja‘farī	15 Rajab 833 / 9 April 1430, Herat	Nuruosmaniye Library, no. 3342
<i>Muṣibat-nāma</i>	Aẓhar al-Katib	833/1429–30, Herat	Chester Beatty Library, Per. 121
<i>Kullīyyat</i> of ‘Imad al-Din Faqih Kirmani (for Baysunghur)	Aẓhar	834/1431, n.p. but certainly Herat	Bodleian Library, Eliott 210
<i>Jung-i Marāthi</i> (in Baysunghur’s court)	Aẓhar	837/1434, n.p. but certainly Herat	Tabriz National Library, No. 2967
Calligraphy (for Ibrahim Sultan)	Aẓhar	n.d., n.p. (Must be before Ibrahim’s death in 838/1435)	TSK, H. 2153, f. 7v ³¹
Calligraphy specimens (f. 28r for ‘Ala’ al-Daula)	Aẓhar, Aẓhar al-Katib	840 (f. 22r); 850 (f. 28r)	TS, H. 2154, f. 22r, 23r, 27r, 28r, 29v, 30r, 30v, 31r. ³²
<i>Firāq-nāma</i> of Savaji	Aẓhar al-Katib	10 Sha‘ban 846/14 December 1442	Istanbul University Library, F. 131
<i>Kullīyyat</i> of Auḥadi Maraghi	Aẓhar al-Katib	13 Dhu‘l-ḥijja 851/ 19 February 1448	Istanbul University Library, F. 1489 ³³

³¹ The dedication to Ibrahim Sultan reads

اللهم خلد دولته السلطان الاعظم الاكرم الاعدل المختص بعناية ملك الرحيم سلطان ابراهيم خلدته ملكه
كتبه العبد الفقير المحتاج الى رحمة الله وغفرانه اظهر تجاوز الله عن سيئاته

May God perpetuate his kingdom, the greatest Sultan, the most just, the most generous; who is blessed with the Compassionate regards, Sultan Ibrahim, may God make his rule eternal.

Transcribed by Aẓhar the slave, the poor, in need of God’s mercy and forgiveness, may God forgive his sins.

³² Roxburgh, D.J. “Our Works Point to Us’: *Album making, collecting, and art (1427–1565) under the Timurids and Safavids*” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1996): 793–831.

³³ Bayani believes the signature is a later addition. Bayāni (1363/1984): 72.

Calligraphy specimens	Azhar al-Katib		Istanbul University Library, F. 1423 (Baba Naqqash album), ff. 12r, 28r, 56v.
Calligraphy specimens (Prayers of ‘Ali b. Abu Talib)	Azhar al-Katib	857/1449, Herat	Istanbul University Library, F. 1422 (Shah Tahmasp album), ff. 9r, 9v, 37r, 64r, 71v ³⁴
<i>Būstān</i> of Sa‘di	Azhar	Rajab 860/June-July 1456, n.p.	Ezzat Malek Soudavar Collection ³⁵
<i>Khamsa</i> of Nizami (for Abu al-Qasim Babur (d. 861))	Azhar Katib	c. 861	Based on an account in TSK, H. 762, ff. 316v–317r ³⁶
A folio of <i>Laylā and Majnūn</i>	-	From the above ms?	TSK, H. 2161 (Amir Ghayb Beg album), f. 67v
Calligraphy specimen (for Sultan Abu Sa‘id)	Azhar	n.d. (after 861), Samarqand	TSK, H. 2138 (Shah Isma‘il album), f. 28v
<i>Muqatta‘āt</i> of Ibn Yamin Faryumadi (Containing Pir Budaq’s <i>ex libris</i>)	Azhar	4 Rajab 864/1459, Mashhad	TIEM, no. 1927 ³⁷

³⁴ Roxburgh, D.J. “Catalogue of Scripts by the Seven Masters, H. 2310: A Timurid Album at the Ottoman Court,” *Art Turc, Turkish Art: 10th International Congress of Turkish Art*, Geneva 17–23 September 1995 (Geneva: Fondation Max van Berchem, 1999): 587–97. (1999): 359.

³⁵ For more details see Christie’s sale (7 October 2008, lot 298):

<http://www.christies.com/lotfinder/books-manuscripts/sheikh-muslih-al-din-sadi-bustan-copied-5125425-details.aspx?from=salesummary&intobjectid=5125425&sid=74c01a3d-82f6-47db-b121-dc20de5e9e59>

³⁶ Thackston (2001): 50.

³⁷ This manuscript might have been among the booty that Pir Budaq acquired from Herat and into which he inserted his *ex libris*.

<i>Khusrau-u Shirin</i> of Nizami	Azhar al-Sultani	24 Rabi' II 824/28 April 1421 (the real date is 864/1460)	John Rylands Library, Pers. 6
<i>Divan</i> of Jami	Azhar al-Katib al-Sultani	n.d. (probably around the same time as the above, judging by its sobriquet)	TSK, A. 2540
<i>Mathnavi Ma'navi</i> of Rumi	Azhar	Rabi' I 872/ October 1467	Majles Library, no. 258
Calligraphy specimen (probably for Uzun Hasan (r. 828–882))	Azhar	873/1468, Shamakhi	TSK, H. 2153 (Sultan Ya'qub album), ff. 7v, 31r, 33v, 100r, 102v, 121r, f. 94r
<i>Khamsa</i> of Nizami	Azhar Tabrizi	Rajab 877/ December 1472, Isfahan	Lahore, Punjab University Library, no. 575 ³⁸
<i>Khamsa</i> of Amir Khusrau Dihlavi	Azhar Tabrizi	877/ December 1472, Isfahan	Lahore, Punjab University Library, no. 572 ³⁹
Anthology (Iraqi, Auhadi Maraghi, Khwaju Kirmani, Amir Na'imi)	Azhar al-Katib	Muharram 880/ May 1475, Herat	Aligarh University ⁴⁰
<i>Haft Paykar</i>	Azhar al-Katib	988/1580	Metropolitan Museum of Art, no. 13.228.13
<i>Bustan</i> of Sa'di	Azhar al-Katib	987/1579	National Archive of Kabul, no. 222
Calligraphy fragments (probably for 'Ala' al-Daula)	Azhar, Azhar al-Katib	n.d., Herat?	Golestan Palace, Gulshan album (no. 1663–64), ff. 49, 181, 197.

³⁸ Bashir Husayn, M. *Fihrist-i Makhtūāt-i Shirāni* (Lahor, 1968): 1:105.

³⁹ Bashir Husayn (Lahor, 1968): 1:105.

⁴⁰ Habibi (1356): 736–37. I have not examined this manuscript nor had access to its digital images, but the late date and the colophon wording sounds uncertain to me.

Calligraphy folios and specimens (Poems of Kamāl Khujandi, Auḥadi, Ḥafiz, etc.)	Azhar	n.d.	Sohayli Collection ⁴¹
Calligraphy specimens	Azhar	n.d.	TSK, H. 2151 (Amir Ḥusayn Beg album) ⁴²
A calligraphy specimen	Azhar	n.d.	St. Petersburg National Library of Russia ⁴³
<i>Divān</i> of Ḥafiz	Azhar Katib	n.d.	Asghar Mahdavi's collection, no. 588 ⁴⁴

Most of the works listed in Table (1) have been closely examined by the author; some are decisively in Azhar's hand, but there is an aura of doubt around a few others. Even though the name of Azhar is indicated in the colophons of the latter group, they are not convincingly penned by our Azhar. The first is a copy of the *Muṣibat-nāma* of 'Aṭṭar in the Chester Beatty Library, Per. 121, dated 833/1429–30 and signed Azhar al-Katib. It accommodates Mughal illuminations and restorations, in addition to four modern illustrations, all painted over the text.

The *Muṣibat-nāma* (Book of Affliction) by Farid al-Din 'Aṭṭar Nishapuri (c. 1145–c. 1220) is among the neglected manuscripts associated with Azhar.⁴⁵ As noted above, he was working at Prince Baysunghur's library in Herat at this particular time (833–34/1430–31), and was involved in copying a couple of manuscripts (*Sirat al-Nabī* and *Kullīyyāt*), but it seems that as an early career he did not use the *nisba* al-Katib at this particular time. The association of the Chester Beatty *Muṣibat-nāma* with Azhar and Prince Baysunghur's atelier require justification. Each folio consists of two or three separate sections: the text, the decorated frame around it and the Indian paper margin (fig. 5). The peregrination of the codex is further attested by the numerous seal impressions and librarians' inspection notes on the front and back flyleaves. The four added paintings in ff. 3v, 77r, 128v and 142v are similar in style and figurative features to four subsequently added illustrations in

⁴¹ Soudavar, A. *Art of the Persian Courts: selections from the Art and History Trust Collection* (New York, 1992): 134.

⁴² Ḥabībī, 'A. *Hunar-i 'Ahd-i Taymuriān* (Tehran, 1355/1976): 311.

⁴³ Bayānī (1363/1984): 72.

⁴⁴ Bayani believed the association of this work to Azhar was not solid. Ibid.

⁴⁵ It is not among Baysunghuri productions listed in Robinson, B.W. "Prince Baysunghur's Nizami: a speculation", *Ars Orientalis* 2 (1957): 383–91, nor in any other study of the prince's library or elsewhere.

the Baysunghuri copy of the *Tārīkh-i Vaṣṣāf* completed in 835/1432 in Herat (Keir Collection of Islamic Art, Dallas Museum of Art, no. K.1.2014.1402).⁴⁶ Due to lack of space in the *Muṣibat-nāma*, the painter had to cover the text in order to insert paintings, but in the *Tārīkh-i Vaṣṣāf* the illustrations were executed in the spaces left between the end of each section of the book and the next. Curiously, the same number of illustrations were added to a copy of the *Divan* of Qasim Anvar, dated 861/1457 (BL, Or. 11363). They appear to have been the output of the same individual artist or forgery workshop, evidently done in the early 20th century.⁴⁷

In short, the illumination style, page layout and ruling of the CBL manuscript are dissimilar to the aesthetic of the prince's productions. Despite the similarities of the calligraphy in the *Muṣibat-nāma* to definite works of Aẓhar, I could hypothesise that it was probably an early forgery done in India, mimicking the hand of Aẓhar, whose works were valued highly in Mughal courts. The Indian style of the *shamsa* and the occasional gold drawings on the margins, the incongruous style of illuminations, the ownership notes and seals, as well as the remounted Indian paper support this hypothesis (fig. 5).

HAFT PAYKAR

Another dubious work with a signature of Aẓhar al-Katib is a copy of the *Haft Paykar* of Nizami Ganjavi (1141–1209) in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (no. 13.228.13). The manuscript opens to an illuminated *shamsa* with a dedication stating that the “delicate book” was a present from Mun‘im Khan Khan-i Khanan to the Mughal Emperor Akbar. Mun‘im Khan (d. 1575) was entitled Khan-i Khanan after Akbar appointed him as Prime Minister.⁴⁸ It would be helpful to examine the centre of the *shamsa* under x-ray to find the possible inscription note beneath the current gold layer with the name of Mun‘im Khan.

The *Haft Paykar* is bound in an Indian lacquer binding decorated with birds, trees, flowers and animal figures. The poem beings within a double-page illuminated frontispiece in three columns framed by lavishly decorated borders (fig. 6). All the folios are remounted. It currently contains five illustrations, one of which curiously carries the signature of Bihzad (1455/60–1535).

⁴⁶ The manuscript has long been misidentified as the *Tārīkh-i Jahān-gushāy*. It is digitised and accessible at <https://collections.dma.org/artwork/5353110>. The modern illustrations are found in ff. 77v, 78r, 143r and 219r.

⁴⁷ See this author's article on the *Tārīkh-i Vaṣṣāf* in Mihan, S. “An unidentified princely edition of the *Tārīkh-i Vaṣṣāf* and its obscure scribe,” *Timurid Manuscripts in context: Prince Baysunghur, Before and After* (forthcoming), for representations of the modern paintings from all three manuscripts.

⁴⁸ Husain, AKM Yaqub, “Munim Khan Khan-i Khanan”, *Banglapedia: National Encyclopedia of Bangladesh*, eds. Islam, Sirajul; Jamal, Ahmed A., 2nd ed. (2012).

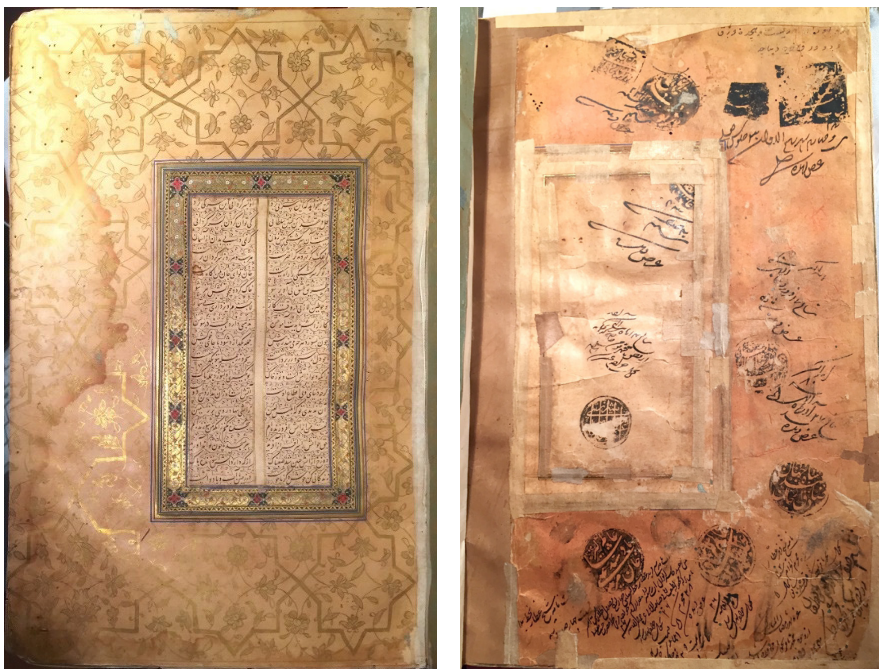


Fig. 5. Folio with illuminated margin. *Muṣibat nāma* of ‘Aṭṭar Nishaburi. Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, Per. 121, f. 5r (left) and f. 162v (right). © The Trustees of the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin

The colophon, added at a later time in slightly different black ink, is dated 988/1580 and is surrounded by several Mughal seal impressions and regal inspection notes.⁴⁹ Robinson believed the manuscript was copied around 1430, and Priscilla Soucek proposes that the date 988 “accords with the moment when the courtier Khan Khanan donated it to Akbar rather than with the time of its original transcription”.⁵⁰ The fact that the colophon date 1580 marks five years after Khan-i Khanan’s death in 1575 would remain a mystery. The hand is, however, authentic. A closer look at the calligraphic traits confirms that the manuscript is almost cer-

⁴⁹ See Appendix A of Lentz, T.W. “Painting at Herat under Baysunghur ibn Shah Rukh” (Ph.D., Harvard University, 1985): 559ff. Other references are given on the Met’s website: <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/455057> (last accessed 10 Aug 2022). Also discussed in Robinson (1957).

⁵⁰ Williams Jackson, A[braham] V[alentine], and Abraham Yohannan. “Presented to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, by Alexander Smith Cochran,” in *A Catalogue of the Collection of Persian Manuscripts, Including Also Some Turkish and Arabic*, Columbia University Indo-Iranian Series, no. 10 (New York, 1914): 71–79. Also, Ekhtiar, Maryam, Sheila R. Canby, Navina Haidar, and Priscilla P. Soucek, ed. *Masterpieces from the Department of Islamic Art in The Metropolitan Museum of Art*, 1st ed. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art (2011): no. 123C; pp. 4, 183–84.

tainly an original work of Azhar, although the colophon was added at a later time, in a different ink and in a triangle with imprecise gold ruling (fig. 7).



Fig. 6. Illuminated frontispiece. *Haft Paykar* of Nizami. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 13.228.13. Gift of Alexander Smith Cochran, 1913.

BŪSTĀN

A copy of the *Būstān* (The Orchard) of the great Persian poet Sa‘di Shirazi is housed in the National Archive of Kabul (no. 222) in Afghanistan. It is yet another ambiguous case where the colophon provides the signature of Azhar al-Katib but the date does not match his lifespan.⁵¹ The ink in the *Būstān*’s colophon is clearly different from that of the text, more so than in the *Haft Paykar*. The scribe’s signature seems to have been added later with the date of Sha‘bān 987/1579. Similar to the last two manuscripts, the first folio of the *Būstān* bears a number of Mughal seal impressions. The text begins in an illuminated folio with gold rulings, and the rubrics are in gold, red and lapis blue throughout the manuscript. All folios are remounted. It is probable that the colophon and the date of the *Būstān* were additions of the Mughal era, as in the previous example.

⁵¹ Afzali, M.A. *Fihrist-i Nusakh-i Khattī, Arshif Millī Afghānistān* (Kabul, 1363/1984): 108, no. 31.

Both imperial ownership and librarians' inspection notes attest to the significance of Azhar works in Mughal courts. The prices and demand for his manuscripts were massively high in Mughal empire, which in turn explains the uncertainty around the authenticity of Azhar's signature in them.



Fig. 7. Colophon. *Haft Paykar* of Nizāmī. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 13.228.13. Gift of Alexander Smith Cochran, 1913.

KALĪLA-U DIMNA

A controversial volume of the *Kalīla-u Dimna* in the Golestan Palace Library (no. 2198) in Tehran has been a matter of scholarly speculation for half a century and has been ascribed to a number of different patrons (fig. 8).⁵² It lacks the final few pages, therefore, no colophon, no date, or place; as a result, its date has been de-

⁵² For example, see Grube, E.J. "Prolegomena for a corpus publication of illustrated *Kalilah wa Dimnah* manuscripts", *Islamic Art*, 4 (n.d.): 386. Binyon, L. et al. *Persian Miniature Painting. Including a critical and descriptive catalogue of the miniatures exhibited at Burlington House January–March 1931 (reprint of London, 1933)* (New York, 1971): 59.

duced a spectrum from 1410 to 1500. Basil Gray discussed this *Kalīla-u Dimna* and its illustration of ‘Thief Discovered in the Bedchamber’ in his book *Persian Painting*. He argues that the artist of the Baysunghuri *Kalīla-u Dimna* in the Topkapi Palace (R. 1022) must have derived it from the Golestan Palace copy, which he dates to c. 1410–20, or from one very much like it.⁵³ His dating of the Golestan manuscript, however, does not seem accurate for the reasons I discuss below.

Giti Norouzian studied the Golestan *Kalīla-u Dimna* in her PhD thesis and later in an article, arguing on the basis of its calligraphic characteristics that the manuscript can be securely attributed to Aẓhar. If we accept her hypothesis, it would narrow down the list of possible patrons of the work and consequently the probable time of production.⁵⁴ Given that Aẓhar’s first work, *Sirat al-Nabī*, was copied in 1427 and the prince’s death occurred in 1433, the Golestan manuscript should have been produced between 1427 and 1433. The similarity of the illustrations in this copy to those in the other Baysunghuri *Kalīla-u Dimna* manuscripts dated 1430 (TSK, R. 1022) and 1431 (TSK, H. 362) further confirms this association and date range.

Another reason to support the connection of this copy with Baysunghur’s atelier, is the programme of illumination. A comparison between the illuminated headings of the Golestan copy with other productions of the prince’s library provides sufficient indication that the manuscript is almost certainly an output of his atelier (figs. 9–10). There are a good number of equivalent examples in other certain Baysunghuri codices from around 1427 to 1430. Moreover, the type and tone of paper is very similar to that of the Baysunghuri *Shāhnāma* at the Golestan Palace (no. 716), classified as *Khanbaliq* paper. The ruling, page layout, intra-textual decorations, rubrication and the early *nasta’liq* style also support this attribution.

KHUSRAU-U SHIRIN

The last manuscript with a colophon associated with Aẓhar is the *Khusrau-u Shirin* of Niẓami in the John Rylands Library in the collection of Persian Manuscripts (Persian Ms. 6) in Manchester.⁵⁵ The colophon bears the signature of the scribe as Aẓhar al-Sulṭani and is dated 824/1421. The name of the scribe and his association with Baysunghur’s atelier have misled scholars to consider this copy a production for his library.

⁵³ Gray, B. *Persian Painting* (Geneva, 1961): 78.

⁵⁴ A summary of her thesis is published in Naurūziyān, G. “Barrasi-i taṭbīqī-i khushnivisi-i nuskhā-nigāra-yi *Kalīla-u Dimna* 2198 maḥfūz dar kākh-i Gulistān bā shīva-yi khushnivisi-i Aẓhar Tabrizi”, *Hunar-hā-yi Tajassumī*, 18:4 (1392/2013): 55–66.

⁵⁵ See my introduction to the facsimile of this manuscript for a more detailed study. Mihan, S. *Khusrau and Shirin by Niẓami: A 15th-century copy in the hand of Aẓhar Tabrizi* (Tehran, 2021).

The manuscript is enclosed in a 16th-century Safavid binding of large-plate gilt-stamped embossed leather, decorated with floral vines and cloud bands, and framed in a border of cartouches with similar decorations. The spine is a European replacement. The original binding probably included an envelope flap, judging by the traces on f. 1r, which was made of deep red leather, because of the traces on f. 66v. The doublures each have a large medallion with pendants and corner pieces, consisting of filigrees of dark brown leather on an ultramarine blue background. The gilt-stamped ground is adorned with cloud bands and floral vines. The filigrees on the medallion in upper doublure are covered with a blue paper and a painting of pink roses on paper has been pasted on it at a later time.⁵⁶



Fig. 8. *Thief Discovered in the Bedchamber. Kalila-u Dimna*, no date. Tehran, Golestan Palace Library, no. 2198, f. 15r.

⁵⁶ Binding is a sensitive part of a codex, and exposed to wear and tear. Examples of manuscripts losing their original binding in less than a century are frequent. As an example, the *Asmā' Allāh al-Ḥusnā'* (God's Splendid Names) in the National Library of Russia (Dorn 56), penned by Sultan 'Alī Mashhadī in the late 15th–early 16th century, is enclosed in a replaced binding of around 1560s–70s.

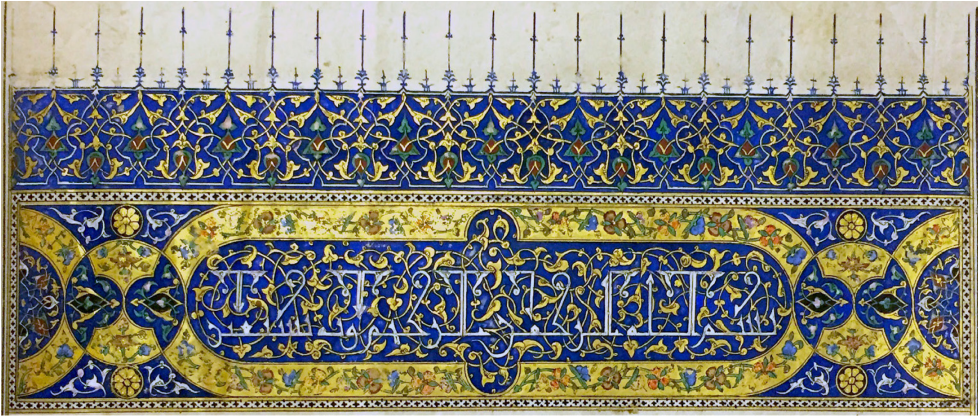


Fig. 9. Above: *Shāhnāma*, 833/1430, Herat. Tehran, Malek National Library, no. 6031, f. 2v.

Below: *Kalīla-u Dimna*, no date. Tehran, Golestan Palace Library, no. 2198, f. 100v.

The codex contains 66 folios including five illustrations, all re-margined with gold-speckled paper of a pinkish hue. The current number of folios does not accord with the note on f. 1r attesting that it once contained 78 folios and seven illustrations, which means that two illustrations and some text folios are unfortunately missing.⁵⁷ The text is written in a neat *nasta'liq* with captions in *riqā'*.

The colophon page (f. 66r) is decorated with two lapis blue boxes carrying gold vines.

⁵⁷ Robinson's study of the codex resulted in a different conclusion: "A careful examination of the manuscript fails to reveal any indication of the miniatures have been painted over earlier work, or that any of the original folios have been removed and replaced with later ones." Robinson (1957): 387.

The frequent intertextual illuminations as well as its illustrations are early sixteenth-century additions. Based on the brief information provided by the scribe in the colophon, which I will return to, we can deduce that spaces left for illuminations and illustrations remained blank until early Safavid artists executed an excellent job in filling them.



Fig. 10. Above: *Kalila-u Dimna*, 833/1430. Istanbul, Topkapi Palace Library, R. 1022, f. 2v.

Below: *Kalila-u Dimna*, no date. Tehran, Golestan Palace Library, no. 2198, f. 100v.

The painters have been identified as ‘Abd al-Şamad (1540–1595) and Mir Sayyid ‘Ali (1510–1572), court artists at the beginning of Tahmasp’s reign in Herat.⁵⁸ Robinson attributed the illustrations on ff. 10v, 55r and 60r to ‘Abd al-Şamad and those on ff. 37v and 43v to Mir Sayyid ‘Ali.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Robinson, B.W., *Persian Paintings in the John Rylands Library: A Descriptive Catalogue* (London, 1980): 148–50.

⁵⁹ Both painters moved to the Mughal court in India in mid-16th century. The possibility of the paintings having been added to the manuscript in India cannot be dismissed, although the manuscript being possessed by an Ottoman makes it less likely. Bayazid Bayat recounts that ‘Abd al-Samad and Mir Sayyid Ali moved to Kabul and joined Humayun the instant that they received his Farman. Bayāt, Bāyazīd, *Tazkira-yi Humayūn va Akbar*, ed. M. Hidāyat Husayn (Tehran, 2003): 65–66. According to Qaẓi Ahmad Mir Musavvir, father of Mir Sayyid ‘Ali moved to India to be with his son and together they established a workshop called “Kar-

PROVENANCE

As part of the story of a manuscript associated with Aẓhar, the journey of the John Rylands' *Khusrau-u Shirin* is also entrancing. It was copied in the 15th century, and bound and decorated in the 16th century. The ownership of the codex after that time until the 18th century is not known, but a note on f. 1r states that the codex once belonged to Ahmed Paşazade Naşid, whose *tughra* signature is seen on the right side of the note. He was born in 1162/1749 in Morea (Peloponnesus) and was educated at the Palace School at the Topkapi. He became chamberlain of Sultan Mustafa III in 1181/1767, and remained in that position under Sultan Abdülhamid I. In 1188/1774, he was appointed as Armed Guard and Head of Imperial Gatekeepers. He returned to the Palace after the enthronement of Sultan Selim III as the Steward of Emine Sultan, Abdulhamid's daughter. He died in 1206/1791 and was buried in Üsküdar in the Ayazma Mosque. He has a *Divan* of poetry and was known as a good poet, which his nickname Naşid (*nāshid*: who reads beautiful poetry) also confirms.⁶⁰ According to the *Tuḥfa-yi Khaṭṭāʾīn*, he was also known as a good calligrapher, but none of his works are extant. On the same folio (1r) a seal impression is seen bearing the name Muḥammad Ibrahim and the date 1197/1782.⁶¹

The manuscript was acquired by Sir Gore Ouseley (1770–1844), who served as the British ambassador to (then) Persia from 1810 to 1814. The Treaty of Gulistan between Persia and the Russian Empire was prepared by him in 1813, by which a great number of cities and provinces were separated from Iran and added to Russia, including Azerbaijan, Dagestan and East Georgia.

Sir Gore Ouseley's notes on the poem and Niẓāmī appears on the four fly-leaves at the beginning of the manuscript, with the date 1837, with his *ex libris* and coat of arms on the end flyleaf. The codex next found its way to the great library of Nathaniel Bland (1803–1865), the British orientalist who studied Persian language in Oxford. He was a member of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland and his several scholarly articles appeared in that journal. A part of his collection eventually ended up in the John Rylands Library, after his oriental manuscripts were sold through Bernard Quaritch to Alexander Lindsay (1812–1880), 25th Earl of Crawford, in 1866. Alexander William Crawford Lindsay was a Scottish art his-

khana" in 1554. Qazi Ahmad, *Calligraphers and Painters* (Washington, 1959): 185. On the two artists, see Deeba, Farha, "Khawaja Abdus Samad (Shirin Qalam) & Mir SayyedAli (A diamond of Akbar's court)," *International Journal of Mechanical Engineering*, vol. 7 (Special Issue) (Jan.-Feb. 2022): 658–664. See also Chagatai, M. Abdulla, "Khwajah 'Abd al-Samad Shirin Qalam," *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, 11, 2 (1963): 155–181.

⁶⁰ His works are found in Istanbul University (TY, nr. 538, 1407, 3278, 5453), Topkapı Palace Museum (Yeniler, nr. 3991), Konya İzzet Koyunoğlu (nr. 13601), Egyptian National Library and Archives (nr. 1912), Berlin, Staatsbibliothek (Ms. or. quart. 1500) and in the Sulaymaniye Library (Mikrofilm Archive, nr. 2187). More on his works is found on <http://www.islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/nasid> (last accessed on 10 May 2020).

⁶¹ I am grateful to Dr Irvin Cemil Schick for his help identifying Ahmed Paşazade Nashid.

torian and collector, and his heir James Ludovic Lindsay (1847–1913), 26th Earl of Crawford, a book collector from schooldays, was closely associated to England's bibliographical societies. In 1898, Michael Kerney completed and privately issued the catalogue of Lindsay's Persian, Arabic and Turkish codices, including an identification of their provenance. Ludovic Lindsay sold parts of his manuscript collections, including the *Khusrau-u Shirin*, to Enriqueta Rylands for the John Rylands Library in 1901. His deposited collections were distributed to the Cambridge University Library, the British Museum, and the John Rylands Library in 1946.

DATING

The colophon reads

بنهايت رسيد كُتاب خسرو شيرين كه آيت مبین و خطاب مستبين خمسة متين مرشد اهل يقين شيخ
نظاميست در اوان ايام تفرقه و حوادث متفرقه كه مستوعب اوقات كُتابت گشته بود لاجرم موجب تأخير
تمام در اتمام شد في الرابع عشرين من الشهر الفاخر ربيع الآخر لسنة ٨٢٤

خدم بكايتها العبد المفتقر الى رحمة الله

الغني اظهر السلطاني

م

The copying of *Khusrau-u Shirin*, which is the clear sign and certain speech of the firm *Khamsa* of the master of the faithful, Shaykh Nizami, was finished during the times of disintegration and various calamities that had ruined the time of transcription – and inevitably resulted in a delay in completion – on 24th of the month of the glorious Rabīʿ II 824.

Served by transcribing it, the slave in need of munificent God's mercy, Aḏhar al-Sulṭāni.

The date appearing in the colophon is read 24 Rabīʿ II, 824/28 April 1421. In 1957, Basil Robinson wrote: "The John Rylands *Khosrow o Shīrīn* is something of a mystery. There seems no reason to doubt the authenticity of the colophon or of the text itself," but later in 1980, in the catalogue of John Rylands Library he noticed that the middle digit of the date appears to have been tampered with (fig. 11). He further suggested, "the left-hand date was possibly also altered".⁶² Some scholars floated the possibility of the scribe's signature being in another hand, and that "the final triangular portion of the colophon may not belong to the rest of the colophon, from which it is divided by a gold marginal ruling, possibly masking a join in the paper".

⁶² Codicological description based on B.W. Robinson, *Persian Paintings in the John Rylands Library: A Descriptive Catalogue* (London, 1980): 148–50.

In close examination of the manuscript, I noticed that the original margin has been separated in a careless way and even slightly damaged the reverse of its text panel. Backlighting with an LED torch indicates that the triangle was not separated from the text panel, as suggested previously. The signature, therefore, is authentic and the triangle is part of the original colophon; however, the gold speckling on the margins has covered the text on the bottom triangle, helping the ink appear in a slightly different hue (fig. 12).

In addition to the manipulated middle digit of the date (2), both the maturity of Azhar's hand in this codex and the sobriquet al-Sulṭāni corroborate the inaccuracy of copying date. If the scribe signed Azhar al-Ja'fari in 833, he could not have been bestowed the kingly sobriquet in 824. It would have been impossible to pay a tribute to his calligraphy master while still being at the service of the prince. What's more, since he lived and worked at least until 860, he must have been very young at 824 and not artistically mature enough to be honoured as the king's court scribe. Lastly, he worked for Prince Baysunghur and al-Sulṭāni was never his patron's honorary *nisba*. The real date, for those reasons, requires investigation to be established.

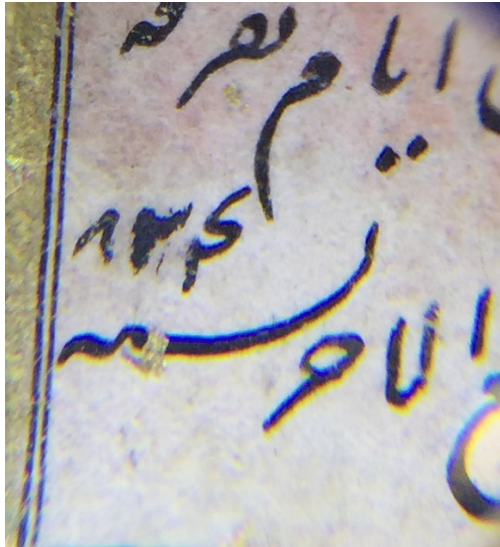


Fig. 11. The middle digit of the date has been altered. *Khusrau u Shirin*. John Rylands Library, Ms. Pers. 6, f. 66r.

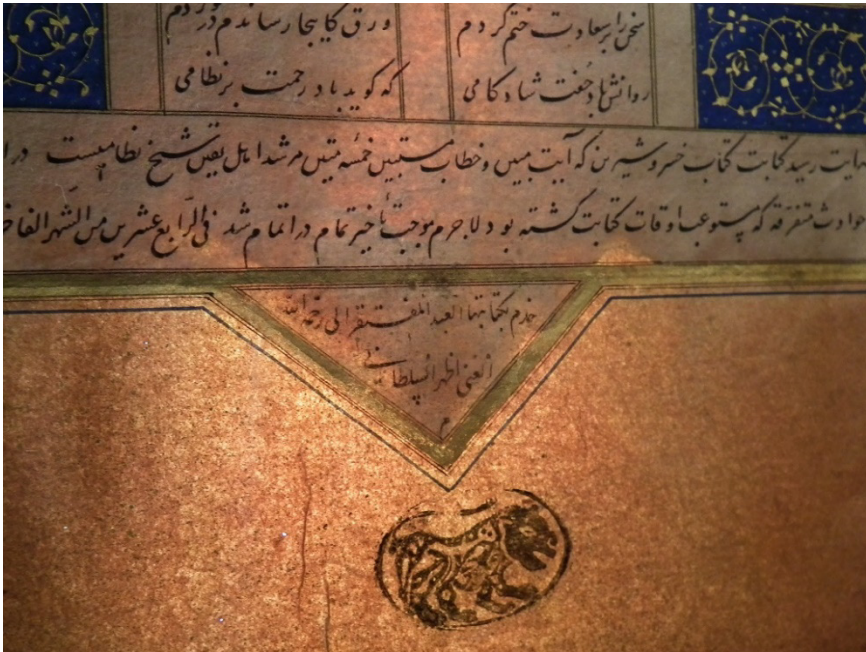


Fig. 12. Backlighting the colophon with an LED torch. *Khusrau u Shirin*. John Rylands Library, Ms. Pers. 6, f. 66r.

Following the death of Baysunghur's eldest son, Abu'l-Qasim Babur (r. 1449–1457), Sultan Abu Sa'id conquered Herat in this same year.⁶³ In 862/1458, Jahanshah Qara Qyunlu (r. 841–872/1438–1467) attacked Herat and captured the city. Jahanshah's son, Pir Budaq was defeated in the battle with Sultan Abu Sa'id, which resulted in a peace treaty between Jahanshah and Abu Sa'id and the Qara Qyunlu troops had to leave Herat in 863/1459.⁶⁴ This turbulent time, as Robinson correctly mentioned, was very likely the reason for the decoration spaces to be left incomplete.

Another manuscript that was left unfinished during this unsettled period was the *Khamsa* of Nizami, from which the first part is copied by Ja'far Tabrizi (TSK, H. 761). Shaykh Maḥmud who continued copying that *Khamsa* also referred to “a course of troublous time”. In her book, Barbara Brend states about the *Khamsa* that, “It appears that the original fragment of text is in the hand of his [i.e. Maḥmud's] master Ja'far, so the period of upheaval might be either the Qara Qyunlu occupation of Herat or Pir Budaq's removal from Shiraz”, which happened in 864/1459–60.⁶⁵ The turbulent time to which Aḏhar referred in the colophon of the *Khusrau-u Shirin* must refer to the same period of unsettled political situation. This date (864) matches the two untouched digits in the colophon perfectly and suggests that the manuscript was probably copied for Sultan Abu Sa'id, who is known to have been a patron to the scribe. According to Mirza Muhammad Haydar Dughlat (1499–1551), Maulana Aḏhar was often Sultan Abu Sa'id's companion.⁶⁶ Furthermore, the sobriquet al-Sulṭani accords with the patron's title. Sultan Abu Sa'id ruled for a decade of peace and construction until 873/1468, when he was defeated by Uzun Ḥasan's army and was eventually killed by Yadgar Muḥammad.⁶⁷

⁶³ Abd al-Razzāq Samarqandī, (2004/1383): 4: 807.

⁶⁴ See Vāla Iṣfahānī, *Khuld-i barīn*, ed. M.H. Muhaddith (Tehran, 2000/1379): 607–9.

⁶⁵ Brend, B. *Perspectives on Persian Painting: illustrations to Amīr Khusrau's Khamsah* (New York, 2003): 107. Mahmud did not last long after the demise of his patron Pir Budaq and Brend's second possibility would be less likely.

⁶⁶ Mīrzā Ḥaydar Dughlāt, (2004/1383): 315. For its translation see Wheeler Thackston's translation: *Mīrzā Haydar Dughlat's Tarikh-i-Rashidi: A history of the khans of Moghulistan* (Cambridge, MA, 1996).

⁶⁷ Khwāndamīr, *Ḥabīb al-Siyar*, ed. M. Dabīr Siyāqī (Tehran, 1974 / 1353): 4: 93. Also Roemer, H.R. “The Successors of Timur”, *The Cambridge history of Iran*, ed. Laurence Lockhart and Peter Jackson, vol. 6 (Cambridge, 1986): 98–146. For a more up to date scholarship, see Maria Subtelny's valuable book, *Timurids in Transition: Turko-Persian Politics and Acculturation in Medieval Iran* (Leiden, 2007): esp. 51–67.

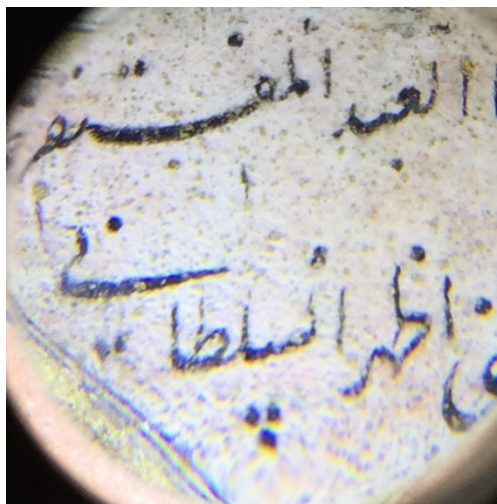


Fig. 12. Gold speckled on the last two lines of the colophon under magnification.

CONCLUSION

This survey of the career and manuscripts associated with the master calligrapher Aẓhar Tabrizi or Haravi affirms his importance in the history of Perso-Islamic calligraphy. For almost half a century he copied numerous works for a good number of patrons, mainly in Herat, but also in Mashhad, Isfahan, Shamakhi, and so on. Aẓhar initiated his work from Prince Baysunghur's library under the supervision of Ja'far Baysunghuri before 1430, but only one manuscript in his hand, the *Kulliyāt* of 'Imad al-Din Faqih Kirmani is decisively associated with the celebrated library of the prince. There has been some uncertainty involved in colophons of the manuscripts connected with him, such as the signature's authenticity or the accuracy of their dates. His incredible fame in Mughal courts caused high demand and surging prices for manuscripts penned by 'Maulana Aẓhar'. This, in turn, resulted in the emergence of early forgeries in his calligraphic style, of which a probable example is the *Muṣibat-nāma* of 'Aṭṭar. A couple of manuscripts with Mughal emperors' ownership evidence present colophons carrying his name, but offering much later dates: *Haft Paykar* and *Būstān* of Sa'di. The *Khusrau-u Shirin* of Nizami penned by Aẓhar al-Sulṭani is an authentic work of Aẓhar which he copied when he was at the peak of his prowess and was established as 'Master of the Masters'. The one altered digit of the colophon date (824) is retrievable on the basis of the scribe's testimony about the political situation of the period. The real date (864) is supported by historical evidence and the sobriquet al-Sulṭani, associating him with his patron of the time Sulṭan Abu Sa'id Gurkani. The latest dated work with a colophon stating his

name as the scribe propounds the year 1475 as the *terminus post quem* his life ended.⁶⁸

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⁶⁸ I have not examined the manuscript personally and rely on Bayani’s account of Aẓhar’s works on the authenticity of the manuscript and its attribution to him.

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“A SCHOLARLY COPYIST”: EARLY ILKHANID INTELLECTUAL NETWORKS THROUGH THE PRISM OF TWO COLOPHONS

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Popular historiography has long portrayed the Mongol conquest of Iran and Iraq as disastrous and profoundly destructive. Among the widely recounted stories of atrocities committed by the invading armies is their destruction of entire libraries in Alamut in 654/1256 and in Baghdad in 656/1258. Although the more fanciful stories related to these events are no longer repeated in scholarly literature, there is still a widespread idea that Baghdad became little more than “a provincial backwater” following the sack.¹ Recent research has highlighted deep historiographical problems with narratives about Baghdad’s decline and underlined the continued importance of the city to scholarly life in Mesopotamia, Iran and beyond.² Detailed

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¹ Mona Hassan, *Longing for the Lost Caliphate: A Transregional History*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016, p. 9; Beth K. Dougherty, *Historical Dictionary of Iraq, Third Edition*, Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2019, p. 17; Jack Goldstone, *Why Europe? The Rise of the West in World History, 1500–1850*, Boston: McGraw Hill, 2009, p. 48.

² On the continued importance of Baghdad, see Michal Biran, “Libraries, Books, and Transmission of Knowledge in Ilkhanid Baghdad,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 62 (2019), pp. 464–502, and Michal Biran, “Baghdād under Mongol Rule,” *Baghdād: From Its Beginning to the 14th Century*, ed. Jens Scheiner and Isabel Toral, Leiden: Brill, 2022,

case studies of particular scholars have also contributed to a better understanding of the vigorous intellectual dynamics and networks these scholars were part of.³ These case studies have made extensive use of a kind of source material which has otherwise been used only piecemeal: information provided in colophons, manuscript notes and various material aspects of manuscripts produced or engaged with during this period. Bruno De Nicola has announced a research agenda to make such data available at scale and has been working with his team on a database of manuscripts produced in the period following the establishment of the Ilkhanate.⁴ De Nicola has also worked on case studies that highlight the diversity of intellectual transmission in the period: in one article he examines and contextualises colophons and manuscript notes in one particular manuscript,⁵ and in another he compares a set of manuscripts produced by the same copyist.⁶ In the present essay we similarly bring together manuscript data and information taken from historical sources for this period to focus on one scribe and two manuscripts he copied in the second half of the seventh/thirteenth century. By studying the information he provides in their colophons, we situate him within the scholarly networks and intellectual elites that link pre-Mongol Alamut and Quhistān in the Iranian East to post-Mongol Baghdad and Maragheh, with the figure of Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274) as a central node and the Baghdadi historian Kamāl-al-Dīn ‘Abd-al-Razzāq b. Aḥmad b. al-

pp. 285–315. On some of the problems with the historiographical tradition related to the sack of Baghdad, see Nassima Neggaz, “The Many Deaths of the Last ‘Abbāsīd Caliph al-Musta’im bi-llāh (d. 1258),” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 30 (2020), pp. 1–28, and Monica H. Green and Nahyan Fancy, “Plague and the Fall of Baghdad (1258),” *Medical History* 65 (2021), pp. 157–177. See also, more generally, Denise Aigle, *The Mongol Empire between Myth and Reality: Studies in Anthropological History*, Leiden: Brill, 2015; several of the essays in Bruno De Nicola and Charles Melville (eds), *The Mongols’ Middle East: Continuity and Transformation in Ilkhanid Iran*, Leiden: Brill, 2016; and the essays in Timothy May, Dashdondog Bayarsaikhan and Christopher P. Atwood (eds), *New Approaches to Ilkhanid History*, Leiden: Brill, 2020.

³ Sabine Schmidtke and Reza Pourjavady, *A Jewish Philosopher of Baghdad: ‘Izz al-Dawla Ibn Kammūna (d. 683/1284) and His Writings*, Leiden: Brill, 2006; Stefan Kamola, *Making Mongol History: Rashid al-Din and the Jami‘ al-Tawarikh*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019.

⁴ Bruno De Nicola, “Manuscripts and Digital Technologies: A Renewed Research Direction in the History of Ilkhanid Iran,” *Iran Namag* 5, no. 1 (2020), pp. 4–21. See also the project website at <https://www.oeaw.ac.at/iran/nomansland/about/>.

⁵ Bruno De Nicola, “A Manuscript Witness of Cultural Activity in Mongol Baghdad: Notes on Leiden Or. 95,” *Journal of Islamic Manuscripts* 14 (2023), pp. 70–108. We are grateful to Bruno De Nicola for sharing this article and the one in the next note with us ahead of their publication.

⁶ Bruno De Nicola, “The ‘Kāmūsī Corpus’: A Case Study in Manuscript Production and Knowledge Transmission in Ilkhanid Iran,” *Iranian Studies* 55, no. 2 (2022), pp. 439–461.

Fuwaṭī (d. 723/1323), commonly known as Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, as one of its prime witnesses.

One of the two manuscripts copied by our scribe is a full copy of the famous encyclopaedic text *Rasāʾil Ikhwān al-ṣafāʾ wa-khullān al-wafāʾ* (Epistles of the Sincere Brethren and Faithful Friends) preserved in Istanbul’s Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi as MS Esad Efendi 3638. The place and date of its copying – Shawwāl 686 (November–December 1287) in Madīnat al-Salām, that is, Baghdad – are widely cited. Because of its relatively early copying date, this manuscript has been deemed one of the most authoritative manuscripts for the ongoing new edition of the text under the aegis of the Institute of Ismaili Studies.⁷ The manuscript is also famous for its lavishly illustrated double frontispiece ostensibly picturing the Brethren, a unicum in this text’s rich and varied manuscript tradition.⁸ Much more can be said about the social life of this manuscript, however, and not least about its copyist, who states his name in the final of the text’s two colophons: Buzurgmīhr b. Muḥammad al-Ṭūsī.⁹ We were able to identify another manuscript copied by the same copyist: a codex containing Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī’s *Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī*, preserved in Lahore as MS Punjab University Library Shirani 1557.¹⁰ As its colophon indicates,

⁷ This manuscript is predated only by a few other manuscripts, most notably by MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Atif Efendi 1681, which was copied in 578/1182 in Shamākhiyya (Shamakhi), capital of the Shirwān shāhs in present-day Azerbaijan, by a certain Mawdūd b. ʿUthmān b. ʿUmar al-Ṭabīb al-Shirwānī. The editors of the new edition vary by epistle, and the editors’ assessment and usage of the manuscripts differ considerably. Particularly notable for our purposes are the volumes edited or co-edited by Carmela Baffioni, as she provides for each a technical introduction in which she notes particularities about the manuscripts used, including MS Esad Efendi 3638, which she appears to consider second in importance to the abovementioned MS Atif Efendi 1681. She has also devoted two articles to particular variant sections found in MS Esad Efendi 3638 (on which see below).

⁸ See, among others, Richard Ettinghausen, *Arab Painting*, London: MacMillan, 1977, pp. 100–103; Sheila S. Blair, “The Development of the Illustrated Book in Iran,” *Muqarnas* 10 (1993), pp. 266–274; Eva R. Hoffman, “The Author Portrait in Thirteenth-Century Arabic Manuscripts: A New Islamic Context for a Late-Antique Tradition,” *Muqarnas* 10 (1993), pp. 6–20; Gulru Necipoğlu, “The Scrutinizing Gaze in the Aesthetics of Islamic Visual Cultures: Sight, Insight and Desire,” *Muqarnas* 32 (2015), pp. 23–61; Wendy M. K. Shaw, *What is Islamic Art? Between Religion and Perception*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019, ch. 2. For a codicological description of the manuscript, see Nourane Ben Azzouna, *Aux origines du classicisme: Calligraphes et bibliophiles au temps des dynasties mongoles (Les Ilkhanides et les Djalayirides 656–814/1258–1411)*, Leiden: Brill, 2018, pp. 551–552.

⁹ Throughout this essay, we spell his name with g to reflect the Persian pronunciation of the name, although he in fact spells it Buzurjmīhr, without making use of the Persian letter *gāf*. We consistently refer to him by his first name, and reserve the *nisba* “al-Ṭūsī” for Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī.

¹⁰ A microfilm of the manuscript was available to Mujtabā Mīnuvī and ʿAlirizā Ḥaydarī, who based their critical edition of *Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī* on five manuscripts copied between 662 and

this manuscript was copied twenty years before the Esad Efendi manuscript, on 12 Rabi' I 666/1 December 1267, although it does not note its copying location.¹¹ *Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī* is the oldest major work of al-Ṭūsī, originally written in 633/1235–6. It is largely a Persian translation of Miskawayh's (d. 421/1030) *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq*, but al-Ṭūsī expanded it with additional material on economics and politics, producing, in Joep Lameer's words, a "compendium comprising all three divisions of practical philosophy." For later generations, it became "the most celebrated ethical compendium to have been written in the history of Islam."¹² This claim is indeed confirmed by the exceedingly rich manuscript attestation for this text: Iranian libraries alone contain nearly two hundred copies of it.¹³

In this essay, we take the identification of the copyist in his colophons as a starting point to explore intellectual culture in early Mongol Iran and Iraq. Although neither of the three colophons written by Buzurgmihr are exceptional specimens on a rhetorical or literary level, aligning them with information given in historical literature and data from contemporary manuscripts throws light on manuscript production in the decades following the Mongol sack of Baghdad and on the multilingual intellectual milieu that thrived in the early decades of the Ilkhanid empire. The two manuscripts copied by Buzurgmihr are not only twenty years apart but also written in different languages – Arabic for the *Rasā'il* and Persian for the *Akhlāq* – and in a different scribal hand. Furthermore, the Esad Efendi manuscript is a carefully produced codex, as is evident from its illustrated frontispiece, so Buzurgmihr clearly was a copyist of considerable stature.

THE COPYIST AND HIS INTELLECTUAL MILIEU

In the colophons our copyist identifies himself respectively as Buzurgmihr b. Muḥammad al-Ṭūsī (MS Esad Efendi 3638) and as Buzurgmihr b. Muḥammad b. Ḥabashī al-Ṭūsī (MS Shirani 1557). Ibn al-Fuwaṭī knew him personally. He provides the following *tarjama* for Buzurgmihr in his biographical dictionary *Talkhiṣ Majma' al-ādāb fī mu'jam al-aqlāb*:

685, among them MS Shirani 1557. However, as Ḥaydarī admits in the editorial introduction, they initially considered it the least reliable copy and did not include variants from it. They re-evaluated this decision only after realising that MS Shirani 1557 was based on the "first revision" of the text (on which see below); subsequently, they listed its "Ismā'īli elements" in the introduction. See Ḥaydarī's introduction in Naṣir al-Dīn-i Ṭūsī, *Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī*, ed. Muḥtabā Mīnuvī and 'Alirizā Ḥaydarī, Tehran: Intishārāt-i Khwārazmī, 1385/1978, pp. 6–8.

¹¹ See Muḥammad Bashīr Ḥusayn, *Fihrist-i makhtūtāt-i Shirānī*, Lahore: Intishārāt-i Idāra-yi Taḥqīqāt-i Pākistān, 1968, vol. 3, p. 326.

¹² Joep Lameer, *The Arabic Version of Ṭūsī's Nasirean Ethics with an Introduction and Explanatory Notes*, Leiden: Brill, 2015, p. 2.

¹³ Muṣṭafā Dirāyatī, *Fihristgān-i nuskhahā-yi khatṭī-yi Īrān*, Tehran: Chāpkhāna-yi Dānishgāh-i Tīhrān, 1339/1961, vol. 2, pp. 532–546.

Fakhr al-Dīn Abū Muḥammad Buzurgmihr b. Muḥammad b. Ḥabash al-Burūjirdī, the jurist (*faqīh*) and copyist. He was a scholarly copyist (*‘āliman nāsikhān*), with good handwriting and nimble penmanship and recitation, making few mistakes. He used to reside (*kāna qad aqāma*) in Maragheh in the days of our felicitous lord Naṣīr al-Dīn Abū Ja‘far [al-Ṭūsī]. Then he returned to Baghdad, where he lived (*sakana*) in the Nizāmiyya [madrasa]. I visited him there and I wrote on his dictation (*katabtu ‘anhu*) in both Maragheh and Baghdad. He copied (*nasakha*) in his own hand a number of abridged and comprehensive books.¹⁴

This capsule biography underlines Buzurgmihr’s credentials as a professional copyist, which are confirmed by the manuscripts: he was able to produce manuscripts both in Persian and in Arabic utilising different scribal hands, and he may even have been responsible for the illustrated frontispiece of MS Esad Efendi 3638.¹⁵ The biography also provides some information about Buzurgmihr’s career trajectory, which somewhat resembles that of Ibn al-Fuwaṭī himself. Ibn al-Fuwaṭī’s life, about which we know much more, can serve as a close comparison: as a youngster, Ibn al-Fuwaṭī was taken by the Mongols to Azerbaijan, where Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī appointed him librarian of the famed observatory (*khizānat kutub al-raṣad*) of Maragheh. After the death of al-Ṭūsī in 672/1274 Ibn al-Fuwaṭī continued to serve al-Ṭūsī’s son Aṣīl al-Dīn at the observatory. He returned to Baghdad in 679/1281, this time on the invitation of the powerful official ‘Aṭā’ Malik Juwaynī (d. 683/1283), and was appointed librarian of the Mustanṣiriyya madrasa.¹⁶ Ibn al-Fuwaṭī was also a copyist, and at least three manuscripts produced by him are known today; these, too, would be worthy of closer analysis.¹⁷ We do not know the reasons behind

¹⁴ Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, *Majma‘ al-ādāb fi mu‘jam al-aqāb*, ed. Muḥammad al-Kāzim, 6 vols, Tehran: Mu‘assasat al-Ṭibā‘a wa-l-Nashr, Wizārat al-Thaqāfa wa-l-Irshād al-Islāmī, 1416/1995–6, vol. 2, p. 574 (no. 2017).

¹⁵ It should be noted, however, that illumination tended to be a separate specialisation.

¹⁶ Charles Melville, “Ebn al-Fowaṭī, Kamāl al-Dīn, ‘Abd al-Razzāq,” *Encyclopædia Iranica* 8, no. 1, pp. 25–26, available online at <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/ebn-al-fowati> (accessed 14 December 2021). More extensive biographical details are given by Yūsuf Raḥīmlū in “Ibn al-Fuwaṭī,” *Dā‘irat al-ma‘ārif-i buzurg-i islāmī*, ed. Kāzim Mūsavī Bujnūrdī, Tehran: Markaz-i Dā‘irat al-Ma‘ārif-i Islāmī, 1380/2001, vol. 4, pp. 422–427, and by Muḥammad al-Kāzim in his editorial introduction to Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, *Majma‘ al-ādāb*, vol. 1, pp. 13–59. See also Muḥammad Riḍā al-Shabībī’s important study *Mu‘arrikh al-‘Irāq Ibn al-Fuwaṭī*, 2 vols, Baghdad: Maktabat al-Tafayyūḍ, 1950.

¹⁷ These are MS Istanbul, Köprülü Kütüphanesi, Fazıl Ahmed Paşa 978 (a copy of Fakhr al-Dīn [Abū Sa‘īd] Bughdī b. ‘Alī b. Qushtumur al-Turkī al-Baghdādī, *Kitāb al-Qānūn al-wāḍiḥ fi mu‘ālat al-jawāriḥ*); MS Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Arabe 1499 (a copy of the second volume of Ibn al-Athīr’s *al-Kāmil fi l-tārīkh*); and MS Damascus, al-Asad National Library, Tārīkh 267 (a copy of one volume of Ibn al-Fuwaṭī’s own *Talkhiṣ Majma‘ al-ādāb*). For codicological descriptions of the first two of these, see Ben Azzouna, *Aux origines*, pp. 533–534 and 557.

Buzurgmihr's movements between Maragheh and Baghdad, but Ibn al-Fuwaṭī's *tarjama* implies that they moved in the same circles and had a close professional relationship. Ibn al-Fuwaṭī notes that he wrote on Buzurgmihr's dication by using the phrase *katabtu* 'anhu in the *tarjama*: while remaining somewhat unclear in the present *tarjama*, in some other usages of this phrase by Ibn al-Fuwaṭī the meaning is less ambiguous and clearly means that Ibn al-Fuwaṭī attended reading sessions in which he copied down the transmitter's words.¹⁸ It is impossible to assess the age difference between Ibn al-Fuwaṭī and Buzurgmihr, as the earliest known manuscripts of both are dated to 666/1267–68. We know that Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, at least, was only about 24 years old at that time (he was born in 642/1244).¹⁹ From the fact that Ibn al-Fuwaṭī wrote on the authority of Buzurgmihr, however, we may infer that Buzurgmihr was likely older.

As Michal Biran has highlighted, Ibn al-Fuwaṭī's biographical dictionary contains many entries on scholars whose career paths mirror those of Buzurgmihr and Ibn al-Fuwaṭī. In the first few decades after the Mongol takeover, intellectual activity in Baghdad, Maragheh and Tabriz was deeply entangled with the activities of the influential polymath Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, and scholars regularly travelled between these locales.²⁰ Al-Ṭūsī switched allegiances from the Ismā'īlī polity in the

¹⁸ The phrase is found over 100 times in *Majma' al-ādāb*, often with information about where and in which year the dictation took place. A few cases also give details about what was dictated to Ibn al-Fuwaṭī: *Majma' al-ādāb*, vol. 1, p. 72 (no. 4) (Ibn al-Fuwaṭī notes that he copied down and read out *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī* on the authority of 'Izz al-Dīn Abū al-Faṭḥ Aḥmad b. Ismā'īl al-Shīrāzī), p. 393 (no. 600) (Ibn al-Fuwaṭī notes that he copied down 'Azīz al-Dīn Abū Muḥammad al-Qāsim al-Anṣārī al-Ṭūsī's poetry).

¹⁹ This first known manuscript produced by Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, MS Fazl Ahmed Paşa 978, is a copy of *al-Qānūn al-wāḍiḥ fī mu'ālaḥat al-jawāriḥ* by Fakhr al-Dīn (Abū Sa'īd) Bughdī b. 'Alī b. Qushtumur, a book about birds of prey and falconry. The manuscript is quite luxuriously produced, with several calligraphed chapter and section titles and an illuminated frontispiece. Its contents and production quality indicate a wealthy aristocratic patron, but none is named explicitly.

²⁰ Further research on intellectual culture in Maragheh and its regional and transregional dissemination is currently being undertaken by Hadel Jarada. See her presentation "Islamic Intellectual History during the Mamluk-Ilkhan War: The Case of Marāgha and Its Manuscript Culture" in the webinar series "Pre-modern Islamic Manuscripts," Nomads' Manuscripts Landscape project, 23 February 2022, <https://www.oeaw.ac.at/iran/veranstaltungen/event-details/pre-modern-islamic-manuscripts> (accessed 27 April 2022). Hadi Jorati is also preparing a monograph on the life and social contexts of Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī, based on his PhD dissertation "Science and Society in Medieval Islam: Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī and the Politics of Patronage", unpublished PhD dissertation, Yale University, 2014. We are grateful to Hadi Jorati for sharing his dissertation with us. As there appear to be differently spaced versions of the dissertation in circulation we refer to chapters in the notes below and not to page numbers. For a review of the PhD dissertation on which it is based, see Sara Yıldız, "Science and Society in Medieval Islam," 29 September 2015, <http://dissertationreviews.org/science-and>

Alamut valley to the Mongols after playing a major role in negotiating the surrender of the Alamut strongholds to Hülegü, the Mongol conqueror and the founder of the Ilkhanid dynasty.²¹ He subsequently held high positions in the early Ilkhanid empire, although his exact relationship to the authorities has frequently been mischaracterised as one of direct patronage or bureaucratic service, while it in fact appears to have been a relatively informal relationship. In Hadi Jorati's words: “in all likelihood he merely had an advisory role of some undetermined, and perhaps varying, capacity.” In switching to the Mongol side, he had foregrounded “his mathematical and astronomical expertise” so his advisory role may have been largely in line with that expertise.²² It is likely a major part of the reasons behind why the Mongols funded the construction of his observatory in Maragheh, as its original core project was the production of the famous *Zij-i ilkhānī*.²³ Jorati has argued, however, that for al-Ṭūsī himself this was also a way to create an intellectual environment that could exist largely independently and, crucially, at some distance from the Mongol court and its volatile environment.²⁴ The large quantities of books from the libraries of Baghdad and Alamut al-Ṭūsī had been granted when these places were captured by the Mongols were taken to Maragheh where they no doubt helped to foster a productive intellectual environment. When he returned to Baghdad shortly before his death in 672/1274, he was reportedly accompanied by many of his students and scholarly companions, indicating that by this point the project in Maragheh had run its course and Baghdad had taken over as the major regional intellectual centre.²⁵ Although Ibn al-Fuwaṭī provides no dates of birth or death for Buzurgmihr, nor for his moving between Maragheh and Baghdad, we know that he was in the latter city in 686/1287, when he finished copying the *Rasā'il Ikhwān al-ṣafā'* there. It is likely that Buzurgmihr would have been one of the members of Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī's circle who moved with him to Baghdad in the final years of his life.

society-in-medieval-islam/. (accessed 27 April 2022). For the traditional biography of Ṭūsī, see George E. Lane, “Ṭusi, Naṣīr-al-Dīn i. Biography,” *Encyclopædia Iranica*, online edition, 2018, <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/tusi-nasir-al-din-bio> (accessed 15 December 2021).

²¹ Hadi Jorati has highlighted the deep historiographical problems with the portrayal of these events in his dissertation, highlighting that they should also be understood in the context of factional strife amongst the Ismā'īlī leadership. Jorati, “Science and Society in Medieval Islam”, chapter 3.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid., chapter 4.

²⁴ Ibid. Jorati zooms in on the intellectual profile of the observatory, insofar as it can be reconstructed through the work of Ibn al-Fuwaṭī. This notably includes a brief discussion of the capsule biography of Buzurgmihr we translated above.

²⁵ Ibid.

The *nisbas* provided in our colophons for Buzurgmihr suggest that he or his family participated in the large-scale westward migration patterns that are well attested for the seventh/thirteenth century and in fact even earlier. Whereas Tūs is an important city in Khurasān, that is, eastern Iran, Burūjird lies more or less at the opposite end of the Iranian world, on the eastern rim of the Zagros mountains. That Buzurgmihr's family moved westward and eventually ended up working in the new intellectual centres of the Ilkhanid empire makes sense, especially in the context of the political instability that preceded this time: Tūs was sacked twice during the Mongol invasions of Iran in the early 1220s, and shortly before that the city had seen significant upheaval in the wake of the Khwārazmshāhs' takeover of the region from the Ghūrīds. Large-scale migration, at least among the intellectual elite, was thus already in full swing for much of the seventh/thirteenth century.²⁶ Although we do not know the specifics of Buzurgmihr's or his family's travels, and they may very well have followed earlier patterns of scholarly migration in the Persianate world instead of being caused by political upheaval, it is clear that Buzurgmihr endeavoured to lay claim to Persianate cultural capital later in life. This is evident in the first place from his copying of the Persian text of *Akhlāq-i Naṣīrī* in MS Shirani 1557. Additionally, the fact that he signs his name in both of his colophons with only the *nisba* al-Ṭūsī makes one wonder whether he wanted to stress his ancestral ties to distant Khurasān and especially to the city which had produced the influential Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī.

Buzurgmihr's Persianate cultural background and his instrumentalisation of linguistic capital were not unique. From a cursory exploration of catalogue data and manuscripts listed by Nourane Ben Azzouna in her codicological description of manuscripts from Ilkhanid Iraq and Iran, it becomes obvious that many contemporary copyists had Persianate backgrounds and copied texts in both Arabic and Persian. This is confirmed by several entries in Ibn al-Fuwaṭī's biographical dictionary. A family of scribes is for example attested who were active between Baghdad and Shahrzur: Muḥammad b. ʿAlī Nūshābādī and his son Dawlatshāh, who produced copies of al-Jawharī's *Shīhāh* (MS Tehran, National Library of Iran, Arabic 917) and al-Zamakhsharī's *al-Kashshāf* (MS Tehran, University Central Library 2002), respectively, between the years 680/1281–2 and 681/1282–3.²⁷ Several copyists working

²⁶ Richard Bulliet dates the great migrations of Iranian scholars to the west to the late sixth/twelfth century and attributes them to upheaval created by the Khwārazmshāhs in Bulliet, *Cotton, Climate and Camels in Early Islamic Iran: A Moment in World History*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2009, pp. 117–120.

²⁷ Ibn al-Fuwaṭī mentions a certain ʿIzz al-Dīn Abū Muḥammad ʿAlī b. ʿUmar al-Nūshābādī, identifies him as a scribe and a jurist, and notes that he attended sessions in the Mustanṣiriyya madrasa in 701/1301. He also notes that ʿIzz al-Dīn was an “excellent, smart and discerning youth” (*shāban fāḍilan kayyisan ʿāqilan*); *Majmaʿ al-ādāb*, vol. 1, p. 267. Although his name suggests that he might be the father of our older copyist, his designation as a “youth” makes that supposition unlikely.

in Baghdad in the same period as Buzurgmihr also bear distinctively Iranian *nisbas*.²⁸ Paying closer attention to the *nisbas* attested in biographical dictionaries, especially Ibn al-Fuwaṭī’s, and collating that data with *nisbas* given in colophons and manuscript notes could help in charting in greater detail the scale and impact of such migrations, which have so far been evaluated largely on the basis of information given in narrative historiography.²⁹

THE MANUSCRIPTS COPIED BY BUZURGMIHR

Both of the manuscripts copied by Buzurgmihr are important specimens of classic works. These copies attest to the period’s intellectual life and are especially suggestive about the kinds of texts that were being read in the circles around al-Ṭūsī. The date of copying of the *Akhlāq-i Nāsirī* manuscript, which falls well within the lifetime of al-Ṭūsī, along with Ibn al-Fuwaṭī’s indication that our copyist moved in al-Ṭūsī’s circles, makes this manuscript especially valuable. As noted earlier, this manuscript is written in Persian (except for its colophon, which is written partly in Arabic), and Buzurgmihr utilises a very different style of calligraphy here compared with the *naskh* script he utilises in MS Esad Efendi 3638. The script in MS Shirani 1557 is markedly more cursive and showcases a few features that seem to prefigure the *nasta‘liq* script that would emerge in eighth/fourteenth-century Tabriz.³⁰ He employed a different *qalam* for this script compared to the script that

²⁸ Three examples from the 670s/1270s: MS London, British Library Or. 2792 (a copy of Nāsir al-Muṭarrazī’s *Kitāb al-īdāh*) was copied by Fattūḥ b. Mu‘ādh al-Mashhadī al-Ṭūsī in 670/1272; MS London, British Library Or. 7759 (a copy of Ibn Ḥājjib’s *Al-īdāh*) was copied by Mūsā b. Muḥammad b. ‘Uthmān al-Daylamī al-Hūshānī in 673/1274; MS Mashhad, Āstān-i Quds-i Raḍawī Library 682 (a copy of Muḥammad b. Muḥammad Nafasī’s *Sharḥ Asās al-kiyāsa*) was copied by Muḥammad b. ‘Alī Badakhshānī Kāshgharī. The first two of these manuscripts were copied in the Nizāmiyya Madrasa. We have not seen any of these manuscripts and base our observations on Ben Azzouna, *Aux origines*, 536 and 539 (the first two MSS) and Dirāyatī, *Fihristgān-i nuskhahā-yi khattī-yi Īrān*, vol. 19, p. 15 (the third MS).

²⁹ A quantitative approach to studying social phenomena through naming conventions was famously pioneered by Bulliet to study the scale and pace of conversion to Islam: Richard Bulliet, *Conversion to Islam in the Medieval Period: An Essay in Quantitative History*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979. More recently, Maxim Romanov has contributed to this field with computational methods and modelling of Arabic biographical dictionaries and chronicles; see his “Algorithmic Analysis of Medieval Arabic Biographical Collections,” *Speculum* 92, no. 1 (2017), pp. 226–246. One of the present authors, Aslisho Qurboniev, has worked on quantifying birthplace metadata for authors writing in Arabic in the first five centuries of Islamic history: Qurboniev, “First Five Hundred Years of the Arabic Book: The Native Origin of the Authors,” KITAB Project blog, 29 April 2021, <http://kitab-project.org/b/>.

³⁰ Adam Gacek notes that the mature form of *nasta‘liq* “emerged in its definite form in Iran (Tabriz and Shiraz) in the late 8/14th century”; Gacek, *Arabic Manuscripts: A Vademecum for Readers*, Leiden: Brill, 2009, p. 165. For a detailed discussion of the genesis of *nasta‘liq*, see

appears in the Esad Efendi manuscript.³¹ The manuscript concludes with a short letter from the famous Persian mystic Abū Saʿīd b. Abū l-Khayr (d. 440/1049) to Ibn Sīnā (d. 427/1037), followed by the latter's answer and a three-line prayer by Ibn Sīnā.³² This material is in Arabic and is written in a *naskh* script that has some similarities with the script used in MS Esad Efendi 3638, so it appears likely that this addition, too, was copied by Buzurgmihr. The nimble switching between scripts shows that already by the mid-seventh/thirteenth century, before the formalisation of *nastaʿlīq*, a distinction existed between what were considered the appropriate calligraphic hands for Arabic and Persian, respectively. These two manuscripts offer an opportunity to study more closely the *modus operandi* of a scribe adept at writing in both hands.

Yet beyond its linguistic and calligraphic nuances, there are still more reasons that make this copy of *Akhlāq-i Nāṣiri* an important witness to the social, intellectual and political shifts in Iran within al-Ṭūsī's lifetime. It is the oldest extant manuscript of his first revised version of the work, after he changed the original preface, in which he generously praised his Ismāʿīlī patrons, to one in which he distanced himself from them.³³ The original work, written twenty years earlier in 633/1236, had been composed at the request of the local Ismāʿīlī ruler (*muhtasham*) of Quhistān, Nāṣir al-Dīn b. ʿAbd al-Raḥīm b. Abī Manṣūr (d. 655/1257), and it included a preface (*khutba*) and an epilogue (*khātima*) with a clear Ismāʿīlī tenor.³⁴ In the original preface, al-Ṭūsī invoked and eulogised the Ismāʿīlī imam, the ruler of Alamut ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Muḥammad, in an Ismāʿīlī fashion as “Lord of the Lords, Master of the Age, the Interpreter of the Divine, the Most High (ʿAlā) of the World and the Religion (*al-Dīn*), the Shadow of God in the Two Worlds, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan glorified be his mentioning and sanctified be his command (*li-dhikrihi al-tasbiḥ wa-li-amrihi al-taqdis*)”, while hailing Nāṣir al-Dīn as “the Greatest King, the Exalted

Elaine Wright, *The Look of the Book: Manuscript Production in Shiraz, 1303–1452*, Washington, DC: Freer Gallery of Art Occasional Series, 2012, pp. 231–254.

³¹ We are grateful to Frédéric Bauden for his advice on this point.

³² In the lower margin, below the prayer, a well-known quatrain also attributed to Ibn Sīnā is written in a later hand in fully developed *nastaʿlīq*. Compare De Nicola's interpretation of poetry attributed to Ibn Sīnā on the title page of MS Leiden, Or. 95, an important early copy of al-Ṭūsī's *Ḥall mushkilāt al-Ishārāt*. De Nicola, “Manuscript Witness”, p. 91.

³³ Other “Ismāʿīlī elements,” however, were preserved, which leaves no doubt about this copy's uniqueness, a fact not immediately realised by the editors of the work, Mīnuvī and Ḥaydarī. Al-Ṭūsī, *Akhlāq-i Nāṣiri*, ed. Mīnuvī and Ḥaydarī, p. 7.

³⁴ This preface is preserved in at least four manuscripts and was first edited and published by Jalāl al-Dīn Humāʾī as “Muqaddima-yi qadīm-i Akhlāq-i Nāṣiri,” *Majalla-yi Dānishkada-yi adabiyāt-i dānishgāh-i Tīhrān* 3, no 3 (Farvardīn 1335/1957), pp. 17–25. The text of the epilogue, part of the “old preface,” and a discussion of the context can be found in Mudarris Rażavī, *Aḥvāl va āṣār-i Naṣir al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī*, Tehran: Intishārāt-i Bunyād-i Farhang-i Irān, 1354/1976, pp. 449–455. The edition of *Akhlāq-i Nāṣiri* by Mīnuvī and Ḥaydarī omits both the old preface and the epilogue.

Pādishāh, the Supporter (*Nāṣir*) of Truth/God and Religion (*al-Dīn*), the Refuge of Islam and all Muslims, the King of the Kings of both Arabs and Persians, the Most Just among the Commanders of the Sword and the Pen, the Emperor of the World and the Sovereign of Iran.”³⁵ After the fall of Alamut, al-Ṭūsī replaced the Ismā‘īlī preface with a new one, in which he described his more than two decades of association with Nizārī Ismā‘īlīs as “forced exile” and “imprisonment.”³⁶ He also changed the preambles of at least three other works that he had written for his Ismā‘īlī patrons to reflect the changing political realities.³⁷ However, the rest of the Ismā‘īlī references in the *Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī*, as well as the epilogue, were not removed from the revised text. While several manuscripts preserve the original Ismā‘īlī preface and epilogue, MS Shirani 1557 represents a unique in-between case, a witness to the complex composition history of the text. This complicated history must have had significant implications for copyists of al-Ṭūsī’s work such as Buzurgmihr, who in the Persian part of his colophon cautiously apologises for any potential mistakes in the book.³⁸

³⁵ Humā‘ī, “Muqaddima-yi qadīm-i Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī,” pp. 22–23.

³⁶ See al-Ṭūsī, *Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī*, ed. Mīnuvī and Ḥaydarī, p. 34. On al-Ṭūsī’s relations with the Ismā‘īlīs, see Mīnuvī’s editorial introduction and his final notes on this subject at pp. 14–32. See further Farhad Daftary, “Nasir al-Din al-Tusi and the Ismailis,” *Ismailis in Medieval Muslim Societies*, ed. Farhad Daftary, London: I. B. Tauris, 2005, pp. 171–182. For a historical critical reading of this “narrative of captivity”, see Jorati, “Science and Society in Medieval Islam”, chapter 3.

³⁷ After the fall of Alamut, al-Ṭūsī also changed the Ismā‘īlī preamble and epilogue of his short Persian treatise on astronomy, the *Risāla-yi Mu‘īniyya*, and its commentary, *Sharḥ-i Mu‘īniyya*, both written at the request of Abū Shams Mu‘īn al-Dīn, the son of Nāṣir al-Dīn. Some manuscripts still contain the original preamble with the exaltation of the Ismā‘īlī imam and the patrons. Raḡavī, *Aḥvāl va āsār*, pp. 384–390. Discussing al-Ṭūsī’s “rebranding” of himself, Hadi Jorati has argued that al-Ṭūsī “purposely destroyed the material evidence for his deep involvement with the Batinis, so as to pave the way for a new life under the Ilkhans”. Jorati, “Science and Society in Medieval Islam”, chapter 3. Joep Lameer has recently argued, based on his study of MS Leiden, Or. 683/1, that al-Ṭūsī similarly changed the dedication of his Persian work on mysticism, *Awṣāf al-ashrāf*, from his Ismā‘īlī patrons to the Ilkhanid vizier Shams al-Dīn al-Juwaynī (d. 683/1284), and that the text must thus be dated to the beginning of his stay with the Ismā‘īlī ruler of Qūhistān. Joep Lameer, “On the Value of Written Evidence: The Preamble of Naṣir al-Dīn Ṭūsī’s (672/1274) *Awṣāf al-ashrāf*,” presentation in the webinar series “Pre-modern Islamic Manuscripts,” Nomads’ Manuscripts Landscape project, 17 November 2021,

https://www.oew.ac.at/fileadmin/Institute/IFI/Video/Webinar3_Lameer.mp4 (accessed 26 April 2022). On the fate of the Ismā‘īlī elite and the community under the Ilkhanids, see Shafique N. Virani, *The Ismailis in the Middle Ages: A History of Survival, A Search for Salvation*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

³⁸ Although al-Ṭūsī recommended that subsequent copyists (*arbāb-i nusakh*) replace the original preface with the new one, he was aware of other Ismā‘īlī references in the text, which led him to stress the non-sectarian nature of the work and to include another disclaimer at

It is not clear when the manuscript was checked against al-Ṭūsī's later recension of the work and revised. The manuscript copied by Buzurgmihr did not originally contain the chapter on the responsibility towards one's parents (*ḥuqūq-i padarān va mādarān*), which al-Ṭūsī had added to the end of the fourth chapter (*faṣl*) of the second discourse (*maqāla*) in the year 663/1264–5, three years before this manuscript was copied by Buzurgmihr. Al-Ṭūsī added this short chapter at the suggestion of a certain Jalāl al-Dīn 'Abd al-'Azīz, who visited him at Maragheh.³⁹ Only a later editor, presumably the one who also added marginal notes to the colophon, inserted this section in four new folios (ff. 135v–138r), using a less cursive handwriting and including fewer lines per page (14–15 lines as opposed to Buzurgmihr's consistent 17 lines per page); the editor also crossed out the extra lines remaining from the previous chapter and marked them with the letter ج (for *zā'id*).⁴⁰ The absence of this section makes it clear that Buzurgmihr did not have access to al-Ṭūsī's latest revision of the work and relied on a "first edition" that still preserved the Ismā'īlī epilogue and references.

In addition to the preface and the epilogue, which are valuable for reconstructing the early history of the text, the manuscript contains notes of ownership and marginalia that help us trace the later circulation of this copy.⁴¹ Elaboration on these notes is beyond the scope of the current paper, but the ones written directly

the end of the introduction, apologising to readers for any potential faults in the text. See al-Ṭūsī, *Akhlāq-i Nāširī*, MS Shirani 1557, f. 212v; see also, al-Ṭūsī, *Akhlāq-i Nāširī*, ed. Mīnuvī and Ḥaydarī, pp. 35–37.

³⁹ Mudarris Raḡavī and Jamāl al-Dīn Humā'ī identified him as 'Izz al-Dīn Abū l-Muḡaffar 'Abd al-'Azīz Ja'far b. Ḥusayn al-Naysābūrī, whom Ibn al-Fuwaṭī mentions as an Ilkhanid inspector and chancery official for Wāsiṭ and Basra with connections to Shams al-Dīn and 'Alā al-Dīn Juwaynī. Although Ibn al-Fuwaṭī's mention of this individual's visit to Maragheh makes him a likely candidate, his different *laqab* and the absence of the *nisba* in early manuscripts of *Akhlāq-i Nāširī* led Mīnuvī and Ḥaydarī to doubt the identification. See al-Ṭūsī, *Akhlāq-i Nāširī*, ed. Mīnuvī and Ḥaydarī, 387–388 (notes to p. 236).

⁴⁰ These are not the only inserted folios. The person who inserted these folios also tried to harmonise this copy with the later revision of the work. Other folios were inserted by other owners: f. 8, written in a very sloppy handwriting, and f. 151, written in a highly refined *nasta'liq*, were clearly inserted much later. See also Ḥaydarī's introduction to al-Ṭūsī, *Akhlāq-i Nāširī*, 11.

⁴¹ At one point, for example, it belonged to the royal library of the emperor Awrangzeb, who apparently consulted it twice, first on 7 Rabī' I 1103/28 November 1691 and again on 3 Rabī' I 1305/2 November 1693. Later, during Nādir Shāh's invasion of India, the manuscript seems to have been looted from the royal treasury and sold in a Delhi market before a buyer named 'Abd al-Hādī gifted it back to the royal library on 20 Jumādā II 1171/28 February 1758. See Muḡammad Bāqir, "Barrasī-yi nuskhahā-yi khaṭṭī az 'āṣār-i Khwāja Naṣir al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī dar Kitābkhāna-yi Dānishgāh-i Panjāb-i Lāhūr (Pākistān)," *Yādnāma-yi Khwāja Naṣir al-Dīn Ṭūsī* [conference proceedings], Tehran: Chāpkhāna-yi Dānishgāh, 1336/1957, vol. 1, pp. 26–33, at 27–28.

on the margins of both parts of the colophon deserve attention. A later scribe, who also retraced fading letters in the manuscript, made sure that the date of the copying was clearly written with letters and numbers next to both parts of the colophon. There is also a calligraphic and fully vocalised *basmala*, presumably written by the same hand, below the colophon on f. 212v, and the marginalia suggest that this was meant to be followed by the old preface: “This is the old preface, which the author, al-Muḥaqqiq al-Ṭūsī, withdrew.” The *basmala* was clearly meant to introduce the preface and now hangs purposelessly at the end, since the preface was never copied despite the ample blank space left after the colophon. Another note on the left margin of the colophon on f. 212v records the “correction of parts of it ... three hundred years after its copying.” And yet another final note in a clear and refined *nastaʿliq*, added at the end of Dhū l-Ḥijja 1035/September 1626 on f. 211r, informs us that the book was taken to Burhānpūr in India and revised by another person, who must have been the one who inserted the folios in *nastaʿliq* and copied the quatrain attributed to Ibn Sīnā on the margins of the final folio.⁴² More could be said about these notes, but already these brief remarks show that premodern readers carefully checked colophons, evaluated their relationship to a manuscript’s body text to clarify textual issues, and did not shy away from intervening in the text to make it reflect better their understanding of the text’s importance or relationship to other manuscripts. The readers should thus be taken into account in any study of a text’s reception history.

The preservation and circulation within Ilkhanid scholarly circles of the *Rasāʾil Ikhwān al-ṣafāʾ* and of works produced by al-Ṭūsī for the Ismāʿīlī rulers of Quhistān and Alamut are curious. The popularity of the *Rasāʾil* and the controversy surrounding the Ismāʿīlī connection of its authors (on which see below) must have had significant implications for these works’ production in a milieu in which the Ismāʿīlīs of Iran and Syria were linked to conspiracy theories spread by their political enemies.⁴³ The destruction of the Ismāʿīlī polities of northern Iran had of course been one of the primary objectives of Hülegü’s campaign in Iran, and it is in the course of this campaign that al-Ṭūsī switched sides. Following this, he personally distanced himself from his Ismāʿīlī past and removed Ismāʿīlī elements from the *Akhlāq-i Nāṣiri*. Nonetheless, he seems to have maintained his connection with Quhistān and remained in contact with some of his former Ismāʿīlī associates.⁴⁴ The

⁴² The reading of the date AH 1035 is not certain, however. If it is read as 1135, the note must have been added after the manuscript had left the royal library.

⁴³ Farhad Daftary, “The Study of the Ismaʿīlis: Phases and Issues,” *The Study of Shiʿi Islam: History, Theology and Law*, ed. Farhad Daftary and Gurdofarid Miskinzoda, London and New York: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 2014, pp. 47–54. For a more detailed treatment of the perception of Ismāʿīlīs by their Muslim as well as European enemies, see Farhad Daftary, *The Assassin Legends: Myths of the Ismaʿīlis*, London and New York: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 1995.

⁴⁴ Seyyed Jalal H. Badakhchani, *Contemplation and Action: The Spiritual Autobiography of a Muslim Scholar*, London: I. B. Tauris and Institute of Ismaili Studies, 1999, p. 8.

copying of the present manuscript by Buzurgmihr in fact coincides with a long journey undertaken by al-Ṭūsī together with his student Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī (d. 710/1311) to Qūhistān and Khurāsān between 665/1267 and 667/1269, from which he returned accompanied by the local prince Manūchihr b. Īrānshāh b. ‘Alī al-Qūhistānī.⁴⁵ In Qūhistān, al-Ṭūsī was the guest of the ruler ‘Imād al-Dīn Abū l-Fidā’, who died in 666/1268 during al-Ṭūsī’s stay. His family remained close to al-Ṭūsī’s, as shown by the marriage of al-Ṭūsī’s elder son, Ṣadr al-Dīn, to ‘Imād al-Dīn’s daughter, the princess known as al-Qūhistāniyya.⁴⁶ Clearly, al-Ṭūsī was one of the most well-connected and influential power brokers in the Ilkhanid realm; he not only facilitated the conquest of Iran and Iraq by the Mongols but also played a role in the transfer of predominantly Persian-speaking scholars to Baghdad and Maragheh.

The copy of the *Rasā’il Ikhwān al-ṣafā’* (MS Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Esad Efendi 3638) was produced a decade after al-Ṭūsī’s death, and its copying is explicitly situated in Baghdad (Madīnat al-Salām), so there is no indication that the manuscript was produced within or for members of al-Ṭūsī’s circle. As noted earlier, the illustrated double frontispiece on ff. 2v and 3r has garnered much attention from art historians over the years. It suggests a wealthy patron, but the patron’s identity remains unknown, as no name is mentioned on the frontispiece or in the body text. In fact, the double frontispiece appears only after the *fihris*t which provides an overview of all the epistles and the respective four parts (*aqsām*, sg. *qism*) to which they belong. In the manuscript, this *fihris*t starts *in medias res* on f. 1r, with the last few words describing the epistles of the *Rasā’il*’s first quarter, and continues on f. 2r, which lists the epistles of the remaining three parts. At least one folio is thus missing from the manuscript, and it is possible that the manuscript’s patron would have been mentioned on the title page on the recto of the missing first folio, or perhaps on the verso of that folio, containing the start of the *fihris*t and possibly some introductory discourse.

The Ismā‘īlī resonances of the Punjab University Library manuscript are in fact also relevant for this copy of the *Rasā’il Ikhwān al-ṣafā’*. Although the question of

⁴⁵ Ibn al-Fuwatī, *Majma’ al-ādāb*, vol. 1, p. 421. The journey is also reported by Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī in his introduction to *al-Tuḥfa al-sa‘diyya*, his commentary on Ibn Sinā’s *al-Qānūn fī l-ṭibb*, which Sayyid Muḥammad Mishkāt quotes in the introduction to his edition of Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī’s *Durrat al-tāj li-Ghurrat al-dubāj*, Tehran: Chāpkhāna-yi Ḥikmat, 1369/1990, p. 39. The journey is likewise mentioned in al-Sallāmī, *Tārīkh ‘ulamā’ Baghdād al-musammā Muntakhab al-mukhtār*, ed. ‘Abbās al-‘Azāwī, 2nd ed., Beirut: al-Dār al-‘Arabiyya li-l-Mawsū‘āt, 1420/2000, p. 177.

⁴⁶ Nonetheless, according to Ibn al-Fuwatī, al-Ṭūsī described ‘Imād al-Dīn as an oppressive ruler “who was destroying people’s homes to build a mansion there.” When he died during al-Ṭūsī’s visit, the latter apparently inscribed a scoffing quatrain in Persian, quoted by Ibn al-Fuwatī, on one of the porticos (*iwān*) of his mansion. Ibn al-Fuwatī, *Majma’ al-ādāb*, vol. 2, p. 34.

the work's authorship remains a matter of debate among modern scholars, rumours of the Brethren having been Ismā'īlīs certainly circulated around the time of Buzurgmihr's copying. His younger contemporary Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328) described the Brethren in heresiographical terms: at one point, in a discussion of the Mongol sack of Baghdad and al-Ṭūsī's involvement in it, he referred to “the authors (*aṣḥāb*) of the *Rasā'il Ikhwān al-ṣafā'* and their like, for they are amongst [the Ismā'īlīs'] imams,” adding that they had propagated ideas concerning the origins of the intellect that had infiltrated the thought of Muslim authors and brought the latter unwittingly close to unbelief.⁴⁷ In fact, throughout his many works he repeatedly referred to the Brethren, identifying them variously as Ismā'īlīs, Qarmaṭians and esotericists (*bāṭiniyya*) while situating the work's composition in early Fatimid Cairo on the basis of internal references in the text to Christian conquests in Syria (referring to the Byzantine advances in the late fourth/tenth century) or in Buyid circles, echoing the narrative about the text's authors first propounded by Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī (see below). He also strongly rejected the apparently commonly held association of the text with Ja'far al-Ṣādiq.⁴⁸ Similar ideas subsequently circulated among scholars influenced by Ibn Taymiyya, such as al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348), who refers to the Ikhwān in at least two different heresiographical works.⁴⁹ Within Nizārī Ismā'īlī communities, the reception of the *Rasā'il* was more ambiguous around this time, although the Ismā'īlī poet Nizārī Quhistānī (d. 720/1320) did refer to members of the Ismā'īlī community of Tabriz as “Ikhwān al-ṣafā'” in his *Safarnāma*, possibly suggesting that the Nizārī Ismā'īlīs of Iran and Syria already claimed the *Rasā'il* as part of the Ismā'īlī canon.⁵⁰ Among the Ṭayyibī Ismā'īlīs of Yemen, the *Rasā'il* had been introduced already by the sixth/twelfth century, as is evident from Ibrāhīm b. al-Ḥusayn al-Ḥāmidī's (d. 557/1162) *Kanz al-walad*.⁵¹ By the ninth/fifteenth century, some authors from this community at-

⁴⁷ Cited in al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab fi funūn al-adab*, Cairo: al-Mu'assasa al-Miṣriyya al-Āmma li-l-Ta'lif wa-l-Tarjama wa-l-ṭibā'a wa-l-Nashr, n.d., vol. 32, pp. 270–271.

⁴⁸ For an overview of Ibn Taymiyya's different references to the text, see Yahya J. Michot, “Misled and Misleading ... Yet Central in Their Influence: Ibn Taymiyya's Views on the Ikhwān al-Safā',” *The Ikhwān al-Safā' and their Rasā'il*, ed. Nader El-Bizri, Oxford: Oxford University Press and Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2008, pp. 139–179.

⁴⁹ Al-Dhahabī, *Kitāb al-Arsh*, ed. Muḥammad b. Khalifa al-Tamīmī, Medina: al-Jāmi'a al-Islāmiyya, 2003, vol. 1, p. 86; idem, *al-Muntaqā min minhāj al-i'tidāl fi naqḍ kalām ahl al-rafd wa-l-i'tizāl*, ed. Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Khaṭīb, Riyadh: Wikālat al-Ṭibā'a wa-l-Tarjama, 1993, vol. 1, pp. 171–172.

⁵⁰ See Nadia Eboo Jamal, *Surviving the Mongols: Nizārī Quhistānī and the Continuity of Ismaili Tradition in Persia*, London: I. B. Tauris, 2002, pp. 132–135. Jamal also cites the *Shāfiya*, a work attributed to the ninth/fifteenth-century Syrian Nizārī *dā'i* Abū Firās al-Maynaqī, which confirms the usage of this appellation by the Ismā'īlīs of Adharbāyjan in the Mongol period; *Surviving the Mongols*, p. 133.

⁵¹ Farhad Daftary, *The Ismā'īlīs: Their History and Doctrines*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990, p. 234. To be sure, the Ismā'īlī authors of the Fātimid period, such as the *dā'is*,

tributed the work explicitly to the hidden Ismā‘īlī imam Aḥmad b. ‘Abdallāh (d. 225/840).⁵² On manuscripts, this attribution appears, as far as we are currently aware, only on two late Bohra copies of the companion texts *Risālat al-Jāmi‘a* and *Risālat Jāmi‘at al-Jāmi‘a*.⁵³ Instead, the most common attribution of the text on manuscript copies is to the Andalusī scholar Maslama al-Qurṭubī (d. 353/964), although in such attributions he is frequently confused with the slightly later Andalusī scholar Maslama al-Majrīṭī (d. 398/1007).⁵⁴

The Esad Efendi manuscript attributes the authorship of the *Rasā’il* to yet another candidate: the Basran group of scholars who were identified as the work’s authors by Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī (d. 414/1023). While this attribution has been challenged by some scholars because of al-Tawḥīdī’s general unreliability, others have endorsed it as accurate. Many accept at least the idea that the text was written by a group of scholars engaged in collaborative reading and writing around the time claimed by al-Tawḥīdī, even if they take al-Tawḥīdī’s identification of the members of the group with a pinch of salt.⁵⁵ Buzurgmihr’s manuscript identifies the

al-Mu‘ayyad fī al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī and Nāṣir-i Khusraw, were well familiar and engaged with the *Rasā’il*.

⁵² The earliest evidence for this authorship attribution is in the work of Idrīs ‘Imād al-Dīn (d. 872/1468). See Daniel De Smet, “L’auteur des *Rasā’il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’* selon les sources ismaéliennes ṭayyibites,” *Shii Studies Review* 1 (2017), pp. 151–166.

⁵³ These are three nineteenth- and twentieth-century manuscripts held by the Institute of Ismaili Studies in London, all copied by members of Bohra (that is, Ṭayyibī) communities in India: Ismaili Special Collection Unit MSS 914, 992, 1009. The first of these is a copy of *Risālat Jāmi‘at al-Jāmi‘a*, while the other two volumes together constitute a full copy of the *Risālat al-Jāmi‘a*. The earliest known copy of *Risālat Jāmi‘at al-Jāmi‘a*, in all likelihood produced by a Ṭayyibī scribe in Yemen and dated to 1055/1645, does not claim this authorship: MS Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, ar. C 93, f. 96b.

⁵⁴ There is a significant degree of confusion concerning this author and his role in the transmission of the *Rasā’il*. The classic study disentangling some of this material is Maribel Fierro, “Bāṭinism in al-Andalus: Maslama b. Qāsim al-Qurṭubī (d. 353/964), Author of the ‘Rutbat al-Ḥakīm’ and the ‘Ghāyat al-Ḥakīm (Picatrix),” *Studia Islamica* 84 (1996), pp. 87–112. See now also Godefroid de Callatāy and Sebastien Moureau, “Again on Maslama Ibn Qāsim al-Qurṭubī, the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’ and Ibn Khaldūn: New Evidence from Two Manuscripts of *Rutbat al-ḥakīm*,” *al-Qanṭara* 37 no. 2 (2016), pp. 329–372. See also Godefroid de Callatāy, “From Ibn Masarra to Ibn ‘Arabī: References, Shibboleths and Other Subtle Allusions to the *Rasā’il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’* in the literature of al-Andalus,” *Studi Magrebini* 12–13 (2014–15), pp. 217–67.

⁵⁵ Abbas Hamdani, “Abu Hayyan al-Tawhidi and the Brethren of Purity,” *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 9 no. 3 (1978), pp. 345–353. For a recent affirmation of al-Tawḥīdī’s claim, see Marina Rustow, *The Lost Archive: Traces of a Caliphate in a Cairo Synagogue*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2020, p. 193. For a balanced assessment, see Godefroid de Callatāy, *Ikhwan al-Safa’: A Brotherhood of Idealists on the Fringe of Orthodox Islam*, Oxford: OneWorld, 2005, pp. 3–11.

authors on the top right panel of the illustrated double frontispiece, thus clearly doing so as part of the original production of the text in a prominent position. He notes that the information was taken from Ṣahīr al-Dīn Abū l-Qāsim al-Bayhaqī's (d. 564/1169) *Tatimmat ṣiwān al-ḥikma*.⁵⁶ As if to further underline the relevance of this attribution, a later reader added a *tarjama* for one of these purported Basran authors, Ibn Rifā'a, taken from “the history” of Ibn Shākir al-Kutubī (d. 764/1363), to the manuscript's flyleaf.⁵⁷ However, as Carmela Baffioni has shown, the manuscript also contains some variant material in the 50th epistle that appears to pro-pound distinctly Ismā'īlī cosmological conceptions.⁵⁸ Other variant, though not per se Ismā'īlī materials in this manuscript have recently been noted by Omar Alī-de-Unzaga.⁵⁹ As such, this manuscript appears to occupy an ambiguous place similar to that of the Punjab University Library manuscript as far as the relationship of the text to Ismā'īlism is concerned. Like the copy of the *Akhlāq-i Nāṣirī*, it may have been based on a copy of the text that circulated in Ismā'īlī circles and that was transferred to Maragheh or Baghdad after the Mongol conquest. Both manuscripts

⁵⁶ For the attribution in al-Bayhaqī's text, see his *Tatimmat ṣiwān al-ḥikma*, ed. Muḥammad Shafī, Lahore: University of the Panjab, 1935, pp. 4–5. On the author, see Heinz Halm, “Bayhaqī, Ṣahīr-al-Dīn,” *Encyclopædia Iranica* 3, no. 8 (1998), pp. 895–896, available online at <https://iranicaonline.org/articles/bayhaqi-zahir-al-din-abul-hasan-ali-b> (accessed 13 April 2022). The attribution to the Basran group is also found on two other early manuscripts (as well as a few later ones), but there the attribution has clearly been added by later hands on the flyleaves: MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye, Esad Efendi 3637 and MS Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Arabe 6647. In the former, the orthography of the note suggests that the addition on the flyleaf was made still in the Islamic Middle Period, whereas in the latter the authorship is explicitly extracted from the Ottoman bibliographer Ḥājjī Khalīfa's (d. 1068/1657) *Kashf al-zunūn*.

⁵⁷ Note, however, that this *tarjama* concludes with the statement that some scholars are of the opinion that the *Rasā'il* was written by a group of Fatimid scholars. Ibn Taymiyya was also aware of the attribution of the text to the Basran group. See Michot, “Misled and Misleading,” p. 143.

⁵⁸ Carmela Baffioni, “Ismaili Onto-Cosmological Doctrines in the Manuscript Tradition of the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā',” *Shii Studies Review* 3 (2019), pp. 37–62. It is remarkable that Baffioni apparently did not consider the copyist's identity or the location of copying relevant for this discussion. In another article, she has studied variant material related to Aristotle's *De interpretatione* (ultimately going back to Syriac commentaries) included in the 12th epistle in this manuscript: Baffioni, “Il ‘computo delle proposizioni’ nel MS Esad Effendi 3638 e la tradizione siro-araba,” *Le vie del sapere in ambito siro-mesopotamico dal III al IX secolo: Atti del convegno internazionale tenuto a Roma nei giorni 12–13 maggio 2011*, eds Carla Noce, Massimo Pampaloni and Claudia Tavolieri, Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 2013, pp. 253–278.

⁵⁹ He notes, among other things, that the version of Epistle 31 “On languages” found in the manuscript is the oldest known attestation of a longer recension than that found in the earliest manuscript. Omar Ali-de-Unzaga, “The Missing Link? MS 1040: An Important Copy of the *Rasā'il Ikhwan al-Safā'*,” *Texts, Scribes and Transmission: Manuscript Cultures of the Ismaili Communities and Beyond*, ed Wafi A. Momin, London: I.B. Tauris 2022, p. 105.

could be fruitful source material for debates about the reception of Ismā‘īlī intellectual history, which has thus far been studied almost exclusively based on the works of intellectual giants such as Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808/1406). The manuscript evidence suggests that debates about the Ismā‘īlīs’ intellectual legacy also had repercussions for the choices made by copyists, or at the very least that they created a sensitive situation that the copyists had to manage.

The *tarjama* of Ibn Rifā‘a added to the flyleaf of the *Rasā’il* manuscript indicates that the space of the codex itself became a venue for discussing a text’s origins and values. This addition did not amount to an intervention on the scale of what we can see in the Punjab University Library manuscript, but the flyleaf also includes a line of poetry by Ṣafī al-Dīn al-Ḥillī (d. 749/1349) attesting to the growing propagation of the *Rasā’il* as a cultural reference.⁶⁰ Another later reader likewise left a note on the back of the flyleaf in which he mentions having found some statements in the text that accord with Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī’s (d. 606/1210) *Kitāb al-Mabāḥith al-mashriqiyya* [*fi ‘ilm al-ilāhiyyāt wa-l-ṭabī‘iyyāt*]; this note shows that the text was read in conjunction with other important works of philosophy. The later circulation and reception history of the manuscript is not entirely clear, but its appearance in the Esad Efendi Library, which was founded in 1846 on European models and which contained mostly works of history and literature, is interesting.⁶¹

The year 686/1287 appears to have been a moment of great interest in the *Rasā’il* in Baghdad: at least one more manuscript of the full *Rasā’il* was produced there in the same year. This manuscript, which is not nearly as widely known as Esad Efendi 3638, is preserved in Tehran’s Majlis-i Shūrā Library, MS 4708.⁶² The manuscript was finished only a month before Buzurgmihr’s completion date, on 5 Ramaḍān 686 (14 October 1287) in Madīnat al-Salām, i.e. Baghdad, and the copyist gives his name as Khalil b. Yūsuf b. Sālār b. ‘Alī. We are again lucky that this copyist is included in what has been preserved of Ibn al-Fuwaṭī’s biographical dictionary. In his short *tarjama* for this copyist, Ibn al-Fuwaṭī notes that he had “accurate, beautiful, and correct handwriting” (*khayṭ maḍbūṭ malīḥ ṣaḥīḥ*) and that he copied many books and was interested in philosophy and literature.⁶³ The copy is

⁶⁰ For this line of poetry and a translation of the full poem from which it was taken, see Gowaart Van Den Bossche, “Oh Brethren, Where Are Ye? How to Search for Words and Phrases in the OpenITI Corpus, Demonstrated with the Phrase ‘Ikhwan al-Safa,’” KITAB Project blog, 9 February 2022, <http://kitab-project.org/Oh-Brethren-Where-Are-Ye-How-to-search/>.

⁶¹ İsmail E. Erünsal, “Istanbul Libraries in the Ottoman Period,” *History of Istanbul: From Antiquity to the 21st Century*, vol. 8, *Literature, Arts and Education II*, ed. Ç. Yılmaz, Istanbul: İslam Araştırmaları Merkezi, n.d., p. 298.

⁶² A digitised microfilm copy is preserved in Arabic Manuscripts Institute Ba‘that Īrān al-thāniyya 172. Our assessment of this manuscript is based on this microfilm copy. See also Dirāyatī, *Fihristgān-i nuskhahā-yi khayṭī-yi Īrān*, vol. 16, p. 416.

⁶³ Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, *Majma‘ al-ādāb*, vol. 5, pp. 13–14 (no. 4530).

indeed written in careful handwriting with a consistent layout, suggesting that it, too, may have been produced for a wealthy patron. Two further manuscript copies of the *Rasā'il Ikhwān al-ṣafā'* are worthwhile to highlight here, as both were likely produced in the Ilkhanid domains around the same time. The first volume of the two-volume set BnF Arabe 6647–6648 was copied in Shaḥbān 675 (February 1277); the second volume does not include a colophon, but the manuscript is written in the same hand. Although no place of production is noted, by the year 709/1309 the manuscript had ended up in Yazd, where someone crossed out the colophon and added a collation note next to the first volume's colophon.⁶⁴ Another important partial copy of the text was produced in this same cultural orbit, but a few decades later, in 717/1318 by Abū al-Ẓaffar Muḥammad b. al-Ashraf b. Muḥammad al-Ḥusaynī al-Nassāba. This is again an agent who was known to Ibn al-Fuwaṭī: he notes that he met him in 707/1307 in Tabriz and provides a rather extensive genealogy identifying him as an 'Alid descendant. He was born in Baghdad in 677/1278–9 and was a respected poet and scholar.⁶⁵

All of this manuscript evidence indicates a notable surge of interest in the *Rasā'il*, resulting in a flurry of copying activity. The manuscript copied by Buzurgmihr indicates that this interest was at least in part to be situated in elite circles. The production of two manuscripts of the same text in the same year in the same city further underlines the importance of abandoning facile narratives about that city's decline after the Mongol sack. More than a mere coincidence, the two manuscripts of the *Rasā'il* show that the city harboured a lively intellectual culture in which classic texts were reproduced and important new scholarship was continuously emerging.

CONCLUSION

Assessments like the one presented in this article will be much facilitated in the future by the manuscript database currently being compiled by the Nomads' Manuscript Landscape project, but even the preliminary survey of a number of catalogues and databases that we undertook for this paper turned up nearly a hundred manuscripts that were, with a high degree of certainty, produced in the Ilkhanid realm between the sack of Baghdad and the first decade of the eighth/fourteenth century, and nearly half of these were produced in Baghdad itself. This preliminary data suggests that in his later years Buzurgmihr was active not in a declining intellectual centre but in what can rightfully be called the intellectual heart of the early Ilkhanid state. Perhaps Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī's move to Baghdad just before his death

⁶⁴ MS Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Arabe 6647, folio 191b.

⁶⁵ MS Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Wetzstein 1889. The copy includes the full third *qism* of the text as well as the first *risāla* of the fourth *qism*. Non vidi. W. Ahlwardt, *Die Handschriften-Verzeichnisse der Königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin: Verzeichniss der Arabischen Handschriften*, vol. 4, p. 381 (no. 5041). Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, *Majma' al-ādāb*, vol. 3, p. 156–7 (no. 2387).

should be seen in that light as well – as a move to a city that had regained some of its intellectual splendour and in which old centres of learning such as the Niẓāmiyya and Mustanṣiriyya madrasas were housing significant numbers of scholars, copyists and students. Recent research by Nourane Ben Azzouna, Michal Biran and Bruno De Nicola has highlighted this vitality, but there is clearly much more that can be fruitfully explored. We hope that the analysis presented here and the accompanying reader demonstrates the importance of colophons and manuscripts in general as a documentary witness in Islamic intellectual and social history. As highlighted in this paper, consideration of the material aspects of manuscripts and especially the contexts of their copying should be a prominent feature of such investigations into the period's intellectual culture.

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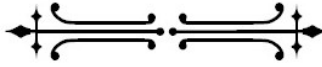
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For the Glory, Exaltation, and Magnificence of Learning; for the Preservation of Cultural Heritage; and for the Peace and Tranquility of interdisciplinary Scholarship, this collection of papers was put together to expand the knowledge of humankind about colophons, most of which were given as papers during a workshop on the said theme that was scheduled to be held in the spring of the year of the Big Disease, 2020, but due to the lockdown instituted for the safety of humanity, it was postponed and finally held in the month of September, on the third and fourth days of said month, in the year 2022, at the Institute of Advanced Study in the city of Princeton protected by the Almighty from all its enemies. This workshop, along with others held for the study of Middle Eastern Manuscripts, was organized by two who are but only Scholars by name, not by deeds, who are not worthy to inscribe their miserable names on the pages of this Tome of Learning, but only because we seek remembrance from you O beloved Reader, George of Bethlehem, son of Anton of Kharpuz and Nijmeh of Azekh, and Sabine of many places East and West, daughter of W of Schwerte and U of Schöppenstedt.

O good Reader, do not be too harsh on us for we have done our best putting this collection together. And do not forget to remember our good assistant, Uta of Buddenbrook's seven steeples and daughter of W and H of the Baltic Sea, who labored so much in gathering this material together, and Melonie of Cambridge, daughter of Ashley and Ruth, who laid these words, one after the next, in a beautiful manner. This text was set in Charis SIL font for the Latin script, Amiri for the Arabic script, SBL Hebrew for the Hebrew script, and Serto Antioch Bible for the Syriac script and consists of 459 pages, 4671 paragraphs, 16,471 lines, 174,160 words, and 912,349 characters not counting the empty areas that separate one word from the next.

